Pride and Prejudice

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1 INT. NETHERFIELD - HERTFORDSHIRE - DAY. 1

A vast mansion is coming to life. Maids pull dustsheets off furniture; servants open shutters. Sunshine spills into the great rooms of Netherfield. Outside, a glimpse of rolling parkland.

TITLE:
"It is a truth universally acknowledged...

It's a whirlwind of activity. Servants bustle around, sweeping and polishing, readying the house for its new occupants. The shutters of a room are opened onto the imposing gardens. A coach pulls up and, through the window, we see a young man get out.

...that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife"

A white sheet is pulled from a spinet and obscures our vision.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. LONGBOURN HOUSE - DAY. 2

Elizabeth Bennet, 20, good humoured, attractive, clearly nobody's fool, walks through a field of tall meadow grass. She is reading a novel entitled 'First Impressions'. She approaches Longbourn, a fairly run down 17th Century house with a small moat around it. Elizabeth jumps up onto a wall and crosses the moat by walking a wooden plank duck board, a reckless trick learnt in early childhood. She walks passed the back of the house where, through an open window to the library, we see her mother and father, Mr and Mrs Bennet.

MRS BENNET
My dear Mr Bennet, have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?

We follow Elizabeth into the house, but still overhear her parents' conversation.

MRS BENNET (CONT'D)
Do you not want to know who has taken it?

MR BENNET
As you wish to tell me, I doubt I have any choice in the matter...

3 INT. LONGBOURN - CONTINUOUS.

As Elizabeth walks through the hallway, we hear the sound of piano scales plodding through the afternoon. She walks down the entrance hall past the room where Mary, 18, the bluestocking of the family, is practising, and finds Kitty, 16, the second youngest, and Lydia, 15, the precocious baby of the family, are listening at the door to the library.

LYDIA
(to Elizabeth)
Have you heard? A Mr Bingley, a young man from the North of England, has come down on Monday in a chaise and four.

KITTY
With five thousand a year!

Jane, (the eldest, most beautiful and most charmingly naive of the girls), joins them at the door.

JANE
Goodness!

LYDIA
- and he's single to be sure!

INT. LIBRARY - LONGBOURN - CONTINUOUS.

Mr Bennet is trying to ignore Mrs Bennet.

MRS BENNET
What a fine thing for our girls!

MR BENNET
How can it affect them?

MRS BENNET
My dear Mr Bennet, how can you be so tiresome! You know that he must marry one of them.

MR BENNET
Oh, so that is his *design* in settling here?

Mr Bennet takes a book from his table and walks out of the library into the corridor where the girls are gathered, Mrs Bennet following.

4 INT. CORRIDOR - LONGBOURN - THE SAME.

Mr Bennet walks through the girls to the drawing room pursued by Mrs Bennet.

MRS BENNET
- So you must go and visit him at once.

5 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 5

Mr Bennet walks to the bookshelf to replace the book he is carrying. Mary is there practising the piano. The girls come in to listen.

LYDIA
Oh, yes, Papa.

KITTY
Please, Papa!

MR BENNET
There is no need, for I already have.

The piano stops. A frozen silence. They all stare.

MRS BENNET
You have?

JANE
When?

MRS BENNET
How can you tease me, Mr Bennet. You have no compassion for my poor nerves?

MR BENNET
You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for them; they are my constant companions these twenty years.

MRS BENNET
Is he amiable?

KITTY
Is he handsome?

LYDIA
He's sure to be handsome.

ELIZABETH
(ironically)
With five thousand a year, it would not matter if he had a big pink face.

MR BENNET
I will give my hearty consent to his marrying whichever of the girls he chooses.

LYDIA
So will he come to the ball tomorrow?

MR BENNET
I believe so.

Lydia and Kitty shriek with excitement.

KITTY
(to Jane)
I have to have your spotted muslin, please!

LYDIA
I need it!

KITTY
- if you do, I'll lend you my green slippers.

Mr Bennet winks at Elizabeth and turns to Mary, a serious, somewhat pedantic young woman.

MR BENNET
And what do you say, Mary? Are you not excited by the prospect of a ball?

MARY
Society has claims on us all, Papa. As long as I have my mornings to myself, I consider an interval of recreation and amusement as quite desirable.

Elizabeth laughs.

6 INT. ASSEMBLY ROOMS - MERYTON VILLAGE - NIGHT. 6

The local subscription dance is in full swing. It's a rough-and-ready, though enthusiastic affair...yeoman farmers, small-time squires with their ruddy-cheeked daughters.

Lydia and Kitty, with their mother, are fussing over their clothes - straightening their dresses, tidying their hair and so on.

LYDIA
(fussing over her dress)
I literally can't breathe it's so tight.

KITTY
My toes hurt.

Elizabeth and Jane are a little apart from their family. Jane looks breathtaking.

ELIZABETH
Well, if every man in this room does not end the evening completely in love with you then I am no judge of beauty.

JANE
Or men.

ELIZABETH
Oh, they are far too easy to judge.

JANE
They are not all bad.

ELIZABETH
Humourless poppycocks, in my limited experience.

JANE
One of these days, Lizzie, someone will catch your eye and then you'll have to watch your tongue.

ELIZABETH
And eat my hat.

She stops speaking. And stares. A dazzling group enters the room: George Bingley, 25, a good hearted soul but prone to bumbling embarrassment when his enthusiasms get the better of him, his sister Caroline, 23, a victim of every latest fashion, counting herself superior to most company she encounters, and finally, Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy, 27, dashing, brooding with an introversion which could be misconstrued as hauteur. They are dressed in the highest fashion. Darcy surveys the hall. He catches Elizabeth's eye. She stares, with a kind of surprised shock. Jane notices and looks at Darcy. He turns away.

JANE
Luckily, you are not wearing a hat.

A hush falls as the local people turn to stare. The newcomers - creatures from another world - make quite a stir.

CUT TO:

Caroline Bingley, standing next to Darcy, gazes at the somewhat provincial gathering with distaste.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
We are a long way from Grosvenor Square, are we not, Mr Darcy?

He does indeed look superior to the assembled company. On the dance floor a young couple, staring at the newcomers, trip over each other, stumble and burst out laughing.

Mr Bingley spots Jane Bennet. For a moment he forgets himself and openly looks at her.

MR BINGLEY
I find it very charming.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
(To Darcy)
My brother is so easily pleased, is he not?

Darcy does not answer.

CUT TO:

Elizabeth has found her great friend Charlotte Lucas - an intelligent, sensible woman in her late twenties. They spy through the crowd.

ELIZABETH
So which of the painted peacocks is our Mr Bingley?

CHARLOTTE
He is on the right, and on the left is his sister.

ELIZABETH
And the person with the disagreeable expression?

CHARLOTTE
That is his good friend, Mr Darcy.

ELIZABETH
Poor soul.

CHARLOTTE
On the contrary, he has ten thousand a year and owns half of Derbyshire.

CUT TO:

Sir William Lucas, 53 a hale but unsophisticated member of the self-made gentry, takes it upon himself to introduce Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy to his daughter Charlotte and the Bennet family.

SIR WILLIAM
(to Mr Bingley)
My eldest daughter you know, Mrs Bennet...Miss Jane Bennet, Elizabeth and Miss Mary Bennet.

MRS BENNET
It is a pleasure. I have two others but they are already dancing.

MR BINGLEY
Delighted to make your acquaintance.

SIR WILLIAM
And may I introduce Mr Darcy.
(Significant look)
- of Pemberley, in Derbyshire!

A stiff bow from Darcy, Elizabeth smiles, Darcy does not.

CUT TO:

Moments later. Elizabeth is standing in a small group with Jane, Bingley, Miss Bingley and Darcy. Bingley can't keep his eyes off Jane, but is frightfully at a loss in disguising his instant ardour.

ELIZABETH
How do you like it here in Hertfordshire, Mr Bingley?

MR BINGLEY
(smiling at Jane shyly)
Very much.

ELIZABETH
The library at Netherfield, I've heard, is one of the finest in the country.

MR BINGLEY
Yes, it fills me with guilt.

He looks at Jane a little blush starts around his collar.

BINGLEY
Not a good reader, you see. I like being out of doors. I mean, I can read, of course -

His sister steps in as the blush threatens to engulf his ears.

MISS BINGLEY
(to Darcy)
Your library at Pemberly, Mr Darcy, is astonishingly good.

DARCY
Thank you. It is the work of many generations.

MISS BINGLEY
And then you have added so much to it yourself.

JANE
I wish I read more, but there always seems so many other things to do.

BINGLEY
That's exactly what I meant.

He beams at Jane.

CUT TO:

Mr and Mrs Bennet stand a little apart from Elizabeth and the other young people. Lydia and Kitty bound up to them in a state of high excitement.

LYDIA
Mama! The regiment is arriving next week!

KITTY
And will be here for the whole winter! Mrs Forster told us!

LYDIA
They're going to be stationed in the village!

CUT TO:

Mr Bingley turns to Jane.

MR BINGLEY
May I have the honour?

They leave, to dance.

ELIZABETH
Do you dance Mr Darcy?

DARCY
Not if I can help it.

Elizabeth, Darcy and Miss Bingley stand in silence as they over hear the following...

CUT TO:

LYDIA
Officers! Lots of officers!

KITTY
How will we meet them?

LYDIA
It's easy. You just walk up and down in front of them and drop something.

Lydia pantomimes the actions for Kitty.

LYDIA
They pick it up. You say 'Oh thank you sir' and blush prettily and then you're introduced!

MR BENNET
I have long suspected that we have two of the silliest girls in the county.

MRS BENNET
Oh Mr Bennet! I remember the time when I liked a red coat myself, and if a smart young colonel with six thousand a year should want one of my girls I shall not say nay to him.

Mr Darcy overhears this. Profoundly embarrassed, Lizzie moves away.

CUT TO:

The dance floor. Mr Bingley is dancing with Jane. His ears blushing with thrilled embarrassment. Mrs Bennet, with a group of other mothers, watches the young couple with rather too obvious satisfaction.

MRS BENNET
7 That dress becomes her, does it not. 7
Though of course my Jane needs little help from couturiers.

Elizabeth wanders through the throng. She looks at Bingley and Jane ending the dance - she is coy and demure, he clearly smitten -

CUT TO:

Darcy is joined by Bingley exhilarated by the dance.

BINGLEY
Come Darcy, I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing by yourself in this stupid manner.

MR DARCY
(shakes his head)
You know how I detest it.

MR BINGLEY
Upon my word, I've never seen so many pretty girls in my life.

DARCY
You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room.

BINGLEY
Oh, she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld, but her sister Elizabeth is very agreeable.

They have stopped at the edge of the dance floor and have not seen Elizabeth and Charlotte who are standing close behind them. Elizabeth smirks as she overhears their conversation.

DARCY
Perfectly tolerable, I dare say, but not handsome enough to tempt *me*.

Elizabeth's smile drops.

DARCY (CONT'D)
You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.

Bingley goes off.

CUT TO:

Elizabeth and Charlotte, who have overheard Darcy and Bingley's exchange.

CHARLOTTE
Ignore him, Lizzie, he is such a disagreeable man it would be a misfortune to be liked by him.

ELIZABETH
Don't worry. I would not dance with him for half of Derbyshire.

CUT TO:

Later. Bingley politely dancing with Charlotte. As he does so, he catches sight of Jane dancing with somebody else. A look of pure longing, but he cannot dance *every* dance with her. Lizzie too is dancing and clocks this.

Lydia and Kitty are exuberantly dancing too, laughing and chatting. Darcy stands watching, a look of infinitely superior boredom on his fine features.

CUT TO:

Bingley is standing with Jane, Elizabeth, Mrs Bennet and Darcy.

BINGLEY
(to Lizzie)
Your friend Miss Lucas is a most amusing young woman.

ELIZABETH
Yes! I adore her.

MRS BENNET
It is a pity she is not more handsome.

ELIZABETH
Mama!

MRS BENNET
But Lizzie will never admit she is plain.
(to Bingley)
Of course it's my Jane who's considered the beauty of the county.

JANE
Oh, Mama, please!

MRS BENNET
When she was only fifteen there was a gentleman so much in love with her that I was sure he would make her an offer. However, he did write her some very pretty verses.

ELIZABETH
(impatiently)
And so ended their affection. I wonder who first discovered the power of poetry in driving away love?

DARCY
I thought that poetry was the food of love.

ELIZABETH
Of a fine, stout love it may. Everything nourishes what is strong already. But if it is only a thin, slight sort of inclination, I'm convinced that one good sonnet will starve it away entirely.

Darcy looks at Elizabeth with surprise. A glimmering of interest.

DARCY
So what do you recommend, to encourage affection?

ELIZABETH
Oh dancing, of course. Even if ones partner is barely tolerable.

She gives him a dazzling smile. Darcy looks startled. He has no idea she heard him. He blushes.

CUT TO:

Elizabeth is dancing happily in a round, Jane and Bingley are also in the same dance. At the edge of the dance floor Darcy is watching.

7 INT. BEDROOM - LONGBOURN - NIGHT. 7

Elizabeth and Jane are both tucked up in the same bed, but are too excited to sleep.

JANE
Mr Bingley is just what a young man ought to be. Sensible, good humoured -

ELIZABETH
(completing the list)
Handsome, conveniently rich -

JANE
You know perfectly well I do not believe marriage should be driven by thoughts of money.

ELIZABETH
I agree entirely, only the deepest love will persuade me into matrimony, which is why I will end up an old maid.

JANE
Do you really believe he liked me, Lizzie?

ELIZABETH
Jane, he danced with you most of the night.

JANE
I was flattered, I must admit. I did not expect such a compliment.

ELIZABETH
That is one great difference between us. Compliments always take *you* by surprise. Well, Mr Bingley is certainly very amiable, and I give you leave to like him. You've liked many a stupider person.

JANE
Lizzie!

ELIZABETH
You're a great deal too apt to like people in general, you know. All the world is good and agreeable in your eyes.

JANE
Not his friend. I still cannot believe what he said about you.

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy? I could more easily forgive *his* vanity had he not wounded *mine*. But no matter. I doubt we shall ever speak again.

She blows out the candle.

8 INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY. 8

Mrs Bennet presides over breakfast with an endless description of the ball. Mary is doing some needle work, whilst Lydia, Kitty and Jane blearily eat.

MRS BENNET
And then he danced the third with Miss Lucas. Poor thing, it is a shame she is not more handsome. The fourth with a Miss King of little standing. And the fifth again with Jane.

MR BENNET
If he'd had any compassion for me he would have sprained his ankle in the first dance.

MRS BENNET
Oh, Mr Bennet! Anybody would think the girls looked forward to a grand inheritance.

Elizabeth rolls her eyes at Mr Bennet, they've heard this speech many times before.

MR BENNET
(not listening)
Kitty, be so kind as to pass the butter.

MRS BENNET
As you well know, Mr Bennet, when you die, which may in fact be very soon, our girls will be left without a roof over their head nor a penny to their name.

ELIZABETH
Oh Mother, please! It's ten in the morning.

Mrs Hill enters the room and interrupts Mrs Bennet's babbling.

MRS HILL
A letter addressed to Miss Bennet, Ma'am. From Netherfield Hall.

MRS BENNET
Praise the Lord! We are saved.

Mrs Hill gives the letter to Jane.

MRS BENNET (CONT'D)
Make haste, Jane, make haste. O happy day!

JANE
It is from Miss Bingley.

Mrs Bennet is stopped in her tracks.

JANE (CONT'D)
She has invited me to dine with her.
(pause)
Her brother will be dining out.

MRS BENNET
This is most unfortunate.

LYDIA
I didn't think he was so good looking anyway.

JANE
Can I take the carriage?

MRS BENNET
Certainly not my dear, you will go to Netherfield on horse back.

JANE
Horseback?!

Mrs Bennet leaves with a secret smile on her lips.

9 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 9

Jane rides through the countryside. A distant rumble of thunder. She looks up...

10 EXT. FIELD - DAY. 10

An open book. Plop plop! Raindrops fall on it. Drawing back, we see Lizzie walking through a field, reading. She looks up to the sky...

11 EXT. LONGBOURN - DAY. 11

Mrs Bennet stands at the kitchen door. A boy is delivering meat. It starts to rain. She puts out her hand, to check.

MRS BENNET
(smiles, satisfied)
Ah, good...

The housekeeper, Mrs Hill, who is with her, looks bemused at her mistress's reaction.

12 EXT. GARDEN - DAY. 12

A louder rumble of thunder. A washerwoman hastily pulls clothes from a line...it's bucketing down heavily now...

13 EXT. MERYTON VILLAGE - DAY. 13

In the local village people run for cover; shopkeepers cover up their wares...

14 EXT. LONGBOURN - DAY. 14

Mr and Mrs Bennet look out at the pouring rain.

MRS BENNET
Excellent. Now she will have to stay the night. Exactly as I predicted.

MR BENNET
Good grief, woman. Your skills in the art of match-making are without question.

ELIZABETH
Though I don't think, Mama, you can reasonably take credit for making it rain. Let's hope she hasn't caught her death before she gets there.

15 INT. NETHERFIELD - DAY. 15

A footman opens the great doors to find Jane standing there soaked. She sneezes.

16 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY. 16

Elizabeth reads a letter.

ELIZABETH
"And my kind friends will not hear of me returning home until I am better - but do not be alarmed excepting a sore throat, a fever, and a headache there is nothing wrong with me." This is ridiculous.

MR BENNET
Well, my dear, if your daughter does die it will be a comfort to know it was all in pursuit of Mr Bingley.

MRS BENNET
People do not die of colds.

ELIZABETH
Though she might well perish with the shame of having such a mother.

Mr Bennet laughs.

ELIZABETH
I am going to Netherfield at once.

MRS BENNET
Nonsense, the horse is with Jane. And the girls took the carriage to town.

ELIZABETH
Then I will walk there. We should not leave Jane alone in her condition.

MRS BENNET
Walk! You will not be fit to be seen by the time you get there.

MR BENNET
Why the devil not. We could have them all laid up at Netherfield Hall.

ELIZABETH
I will be fit for Jane which is all I care about.

17 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 17

Elizabeth strides across vast muddy fields, slipping as she goes. Netherfield is in view on the horizon. She stops to take it in, then carries on down an even more muddy track.

18 INT. NETHERFIELD - BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY. 1

In the large grand dining room Caroline Bingley and Darcy are eating breakfast.

It's very formal, in fact frigid, compared to the volatile Bennet household. Darcy is reading the newspaper; Caroline Bingley is reading a letter.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
(puts down the letter)
Apparently, Lady Bathurst is redecorating her ballroom in the French style. A little unpatriotic, don't you think?

Mr Darcy is about to answer when the door opens. A footman appears, his face rigid with disapproval.

FOOTMAN
Miss Elizabeth Bennet.

Lizzie comes in, her face flushed, her skirt covered in mud. She looks ravishing. Darcy stares at her, then quickly rises to his feet. Caroline Bingley, astonished, looks her up and down.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Good Lord, Miss Bennet. Have you walked here?

ELIZABETH
I'm so sorry. How is my sister?

DARCY
(more kindly)
She's upstairs.
(to footman)
Show Miss Bennet the way, Alfred.

Lizzie leaves. A beat.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Goodness, did you see her petticoat? Six inches deep in mud!

No response.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
And her hair, so blowsy and untidy!

DARCY
I think her concern for her sister does her credit.

A little pause, Caroline recovers.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Oh yes, it's shocking to have a bad cold. I dislike excessively being ill myself.

19 INT. NETHERFIELD LANDING - DAY. 1

Elizabeth is taken upstairs. Bingley, looking tense, waits outside her sister's room. His face lights up when he sees her.

BINGLEY
Miss Elizabeth! Oh I'm so glad to see you -

A doctor comes out of Jane's room.

ELIZABETH AND BINGLEY
(together)
How is she?

DOCTOR
A violent cold, but we shall get the better of it.

20 INT. NETHERFIELD - JANE'S BEDROOM - DAY. 20

Elizabeth goes into the bedroom where Jane lies in bed, feverish and ill.

ELIZABETH
Jane!

Jane's face lights up. Elizabeth kisses her.

JANE
Lizzie! Oh, your face is so cold. They're being so kind to me, I feel such a terrible imposition.

ELIZABETH
Don't worry. I don't know who is more pleased at your being here, Mama or Mr Bingley.

Bingley comes in having attended to the doctor.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Thank you for tending to my sister so diligently, it seems she is in better comfort here than she would be at home.

BINGLEY
It is a pleasure, I mean not to see her so sick, of course, that's terrible. I will have a room made up for you. You must be our guest here until Jane recovers.

21 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NETHERFIELD - DAY. 21

Darcy is quietly reading as Bingley paces about anxiously. Caroline berates him from the sofa.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Stay!? She is a perfectly sweet girl but save being an excellent walker, there is very little to recommend her.

BINGLEY
I thought she showed remarkable spirit coming all this way.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
The eldest Miss Bennet, as you know, I hold in excessive regard and I wish her well settled. Though I do fear with her families low connections there is little chance of it. Their uncle is in trade, you know, in Cheapside.

BINGLEY
If they had uncles enough to fill all Cheapside it would not make them one jot less agreeable.

22 EXT. GARDEN - LONGBOURN - DAY. 22

Mr Bennet is overseeing the gardener who is pruning the hedge. Mrs Bennet bustles up. She looks very pleased with herself.

MRS BENNET
Well, my dear, it's all going according to plan. He's half in love with her already!

MR BENNET
(a touch disingenuously)
Who, my sweetest?

MRS BENNET
Mr Bingley! And he doesn't mind that she hasn't a penny, for he has enough for the two of them.

Suddenly a distant trumpet sounds, dogs bark. The militia are arriving. Lydia and Kitty rush past. They are dressed up to the nines to greet the officers. Mrs Bennet's face lights up.

MRS BENNET
Wait for me!

And she's gone. Mr Bennet gazes at their departing figures.

23 EXT. MERYTON VILLAGE - DAY. 23

Mrs Bennet and her two daughters rush down the street into the village. Dogs bark, children run alongside as a regiment of soldiers march through the street. Geese scatter; shopkeepers stand in their doorways. The two Bennet girls simper at the handsome young soldiers. Mrs Bennet, flushed and excited, runs panting behind them. Lydia deliberately drops her hankerchief. One of the soldiers stands on it. She is appalled.

24 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NETHERFIELD - EVENING. 24

Elizabeth is reading a book. Darcy is writing a letter. Bingley is sat nervously. Caroline, obviously bored, wanders the room looking for distraction. She looks over Darcy's shoulder.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
You write uncommonly fast, Mr Darcy.

MR DARCY
(without looking up)
You are mistaken. I write rather slowly.

Caroline Bingley lingers, annoyingly.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
How many letters you must have occasion to write, Mr Darcy. Letters of business too. How odious I should think them!

DARCY
It is fortunate, then, that they fall to my lot instead of yours.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Please tell your sister that I long to see her.

DARCY
I have already told her once, by your desire.

Lizzie looks across from her book.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
I do dote on her, I was quite in raptures at her beautiful little design for a table.

DARCY
Perhaps you will give me leave to defer your raptures till I write again. At present I have not enough room to do them justice.

Mr Bingley now pacing anxiously around the room.

MR BINGLEY
It's amazing, how young ladies have the patience to be so accomplished.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
What do you mean, Charles?

MR BINGLEY
They all paint tables, and embroider cushions and play the piano. I never heard of a young lady, but people say she is accomplished.

DARCY
The word is indeed applied too liberally. I cannot boast of knowing more than half a dozen women, in all my acquaintance, that are truely accomplished.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Nor I, to be sure!

ELIZABETH
Goodness! You must comprehend a great deal in the idea.

DARCY
I do.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Absolutely. She must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing and the modern languages, to deserve the word. And something in her air and manner of walking.

DARCY
And of course she must improve her mind by extensive reading.

Elizabeth closes her book.

ELIZABETH
I am no longer surprised at your knowing *only* six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing *any*.

DARCY
Are you so severe on your own sex?

ELIZABETH
I never saw such a woman. She would certainly be a fearsome thing to behold.

Pause. Darcy goes back to his letter. Caroline Bingley picks up a book. Pauses. Puts it down. She walks over to Lizzie.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Miss Bennet, let us take a turn about the room.

Lizzie, surprised, gets up. Caroline Bingley links her arm and they start walking up and down.

CAROLINE BINGLEY (CONT'D)
It's refreshing, is it not, after sitting so long in one attitude?

ELIZABETH
And it's a small kind of accomplishment, I suppose.

Darcy meets Lizzie's eye, briefly. He goes back to his letter-writing. More walking up and down. Caroline Bingley turns to Darcy.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Mr Darcy, will you join us?

DARCY
(shakes his head)
You can only have two motives, Miss Bingley, and I would interfere with either.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
(to Lizzie, archly)
What can he mean?

ELIZABETH
Our surest way of disappointing him will be to ask nothing about it.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
(to Darcy)
Please tell us!

DARCY
Either you are in each other's confidence and have secret affairs to discuss, or you are conscious that your figures appear to the greatest advantage by walking. If the first, I should get in your way. If the second, I can admire you much better from here.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Oh, shocking! How shall we punish him for such a speech?

ELIZABETH
We could always tease him.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Oh no, Mr Darcy is not to be laughed at!

ELIZABETH
Are you too proud, Mr Darcy? And would you consider that a fault?

DARCY
That I couldn't say.

ELIZABETH
For we're trying to find a fault in you.

DARCY
Maybe it's that I find it hard to forgive the follies and vices of others, or their offences against myself. My good opinion, once lost, is lost forever.

ELIZABETH
Oh dear, I cannot tease you about that. What a shame, for I dearly love to laugh.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
(small smile)
A family trait I think.

Elizabeth smiles, sweetly. Miss Bingley glances at Darcy.

25 INT. BEDROOM - NETHERFIELD - MORNING. 25

Elizabeth wakes up next to Jane.

26 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 26

Darcy gallops through the countryside.

27 EXT. STABLE YARD - NETHERFIELD - DAY. 27

Darcy, exhausted, rides into the stable yard. In the corner is a trough and pump. He strides up to the pump, puts his head under it and douses himself with cold water.

28 INT/EXT. BEDROOM/STABLE YARD - NETHERFIELD - THE SAME. 28

From a window Elizabeth looks out at Darcy.

Darcy looks up and for a second catches Elizabeth looking down at him. She turns from the window. Jane is waking up.

ELIZABETH
Jane, do you think you might feel well enough to leave today?

29 INT. DRAWING ROOM - NETHERFIELD - DAY. 29

The doors open. The Butler as before:

BUTLER
A Mrs Bennet, a Miss Bennet, a Miss Bennet and a Miss Bennet, sir.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Are we to receive every Bennet in the country?

Mrs Bennet, Lydia, Mary and Kitty are introduced to Caroline, Bingley and Darcy. Elizabeth holds her breath as her mother launches into untold gaucheries.

MRS BENNET
What an excellent room you have sir. Such expensive furnishings. I hope you intend to stay here, Mr Bingley.

BINGLEY
Absolutely I find the country very diverting. Don't you agree, Darcy?

DARCY
I find it perfectly adequate even if society is a little less varied than in town.

MRS BENNET
But I assure you there is quite as much going on in the country as there is in the town.

ELIZABETH
Indeed Mama, I think Mr Darcy merely meant there were not such a variety of people to be met in the country as there are in town, which you must acknowledge to be true.

MRS BENNET
Nonsense, we dine with four and twenty families. Sir William Lucas for instance is a very agreeable man. So very genteel and easy.

Elizabeth cringes.

LYDIA
Mr Bingley, is it true that you have promised to hold a ball here at Netherfield?

BINGLEY
Well...

LYDIA
It would be an excellent way to meet new friends. You could invite the militia.

KITTY
Oh do hold a ball.

ELIZABETH
(trying to stop Bingley being bamboozled)
Kitty...

BINGLEY
When your sister has recovered you shall name the day.

MARY
I think a Ball is a perfectly irrational way to gain new acquaintance. It would be better if conversation instead of dancing were the order of the day.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Indeed much more rational but rather less like a ball.

ELIZABETH
Thank you, Mary.

BINGLEY
(to Mrs Bennet)
Please let me show you to Jane, you will find her quite recovered.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. DRIVE - NETHERFIELD - DAY. 3

The Bennet's carriage awaits. The Bingley's are gathered to see the Bennet's off. Jane is radiant - in the peak of health.

JANE
(to the Bingley's)
Really, I don't know how to thank you.

Bingley beams bashfully. He can't take his eyes off her.

BINGLEY
Really, you're welcome anytime you feel the least bit poorly.

ELIZABETH
(to Caroline)
Thank you for such stimulating company. It has been most instructive.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Not at all. The pleasure is all mine.

Elizabeth looks at Darcy, who does not say anything. She gets in the carriage.

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy.

DARCY
Miss Bennet.

They share a look as Elizabeth joins the rest of the Bennets in the carriage. The driver takes off. Bingley waves enthusiastically to Jane.

BINGLEY
Goodbye. Goodbye.

31 INT. CARRIAGE - LEAVING NETHERFIELD - THE SAME. 31

The family are all squeezed in rather too tightly.

MRS BENNET
What a high and mighty man that Mr Darcy is, quite eaten up with pride.

32 EXT. MERYTON - DAY. 3

The Bennet's carriage is stopped in its tracks by the Militia who are marching en masse through town.

33 INT. CARRIAGE - MERYTON - DAY. 33

Lydia cannot believe her eyes as row after row of soldiers pass by the carriage with not a few of the men looking in at the Bennet girls with some interest.

LYDIA
I can't believe it, there must be a thousand of them.

Leading the one troupe of Militia is Wickham a very handsome blonde officer, Lydia spots him and swoons.

ELIZABETH
(to the coachman)
Please, drive on.

34 INT. LONGBOURN - HERTFORDSHIRE - DAY. 34

As the Bennet girls come into the house, Lydia eulogizing the Militia, they meet Mr Bennet.

MR BENNET
I hope, my dear, that you have ordered a good dinner today, because I have reason to expect an addition to our family party.

Mr Bennet holds up the letter.

35 INT. CARRIAGE - COMING THROUGH MERYTON - DAY. 35

Collins, late twenties, an overweening sychophant, nervous and unctuous in equal measure. He sits in his black garb, hunched uncomfortably as he comes through town.

COLLINS (V.O.)
"Dear sir, the disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late father over the entail to me of the Longbourn estate, has long been a subject of much torment which I have frequently wished to heal. Having received ordination this Easter and being so fortunately distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honorable Lady Catherine de Bourgh..."

Collins' voice fades out as his carriage wipes through frame revealing Elizabeth and Charlotte on their way to the butchers.

LIZZIE
His name is Mr Collins. He's the dreaded cousin.

CHARLOTTE
Who's to inherit?

LIZZIE
Indeed. Everything, apparently. He may leave us our stays, but even my piano stool belongs to Mr Collins.

CHARLOTTE
When?

LIZZIE
He can turn us out of the house as soon as he pleases.

CHARLOTTE
But why?

LIZZIE
Because the estate is entailed to him and not to us poor females.

A cart passes, crammed with sheep going to slaughter.

36 INT. HALLWAY - LONGBOURN - DAY. 36

Mr Collins is ushered in by the manservant, Perkins. He looks around his future home with interest.

Mr and Mrs Bennet greet him.

MR COLLINS
(deep bow)
Mr Collins, at your service.
(looks around)
What a charming house! So convenient for the local village.
(looks at the furniture)
And some very fine pieces, if I'm not mistaken.

A beat. This is hardly tactful.

MRS BENNET
(coldly)
They are.

Jane, Lizzie and Mary enter.

MR COLLINS
Ah, these are your daughters, are they not?

MR BENNET
We have some more somewhere.

MR COLLINS
I must congratulate you. I have heard much of their beauty, but in this instance fame has fallen short of the truth.

A very low bow. The girls are somewhat taken aback.

37 INT. DINING ROOM - NETHERFIELD - EVENING. 37

The Bennets and Collins are seated formally for supper. Mr Collins is served some food.

COLLINS
What a superbly featured room and what excellent boiled potatoes. It is many years since I had such an exemplary vegetable. To which of my fair cousins should I compliment the excellence of the cooking?

MRS BENNET
Mr Collins, we are perfectly able to keep a cook.

COLLINS
Excellent. I am very pleased the estate affords such a living. I am honoured to have, as my patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourg, you have heard of her, I presume?

Mrs Bennet shakes her head.

MR COLLINS
My small rectory abuts her estate, Rosings Park, and she often condescends to drive by my humble abode in her little phaeton and ponies.

A pause. Lizzie catches her father's eye.

MRS BENNET
Does she have any family?

MR COLLINS
One daughter, the heiress of Rosings and very extensive property. I have often observed to Lady Catherine, that her daughter seemed born to be a duchess for she has all the superior graces of elevated rank.
(little cough)
(MORE)

MR COLLINS (cont'd)
These are the kind of little delicate compliments that are always acceptable to ladies, and which I conceive myself particularly bound to pay.

MR BENNET
(gravely)
How happy for you, Mr Collins, to possess the talent for flattering with delicacy.

Mr Collins nods with satisfaction.

ELIZABETH
Do these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment or are they the result of previous study?

Jane kicks Elizabeth under the table. Elizabeth tries not to laugh at Mr Collins' answer.

MR COLLINS
They arise chiefly from what is passing at the time, and though I sometimes amuse myself with arranging such little elegant compliments, I always wish to give them as unstudied an air as possible.

ELIZABETH
Believe me, no one would suspect your manners to be practised.

The girls look at one another.

COLLINS
After dinner I thought I might read to you all an hour or two. I have with me Fordyce's sermons which speak eloquently on this point.
(to Jane)
Do you know Fordyce's sermons Miss Bennet?

38 INT. CORRIDOR - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 38

Later: we can see the girls and Mr Bennet gathered by the fire through the doorway. Mr Collins leaves the room and takes Mrs Bennet aside to a very discrete conference, out of hearing of anyone else.

COLLINS
Mrs Bennet. You do know I have been bestowed by the good grace of Lady Catherine de Bough a parsonage of no mean size.

MRS BENNET
I have become aware of the fact.

COLLINS
Well, it is my avowed hope that soon I may find a mistress for it, and I have to inform you that the eldest Miss Bennet has captured my special attention.

Collins looks lasciviously into the room.

MRS BENNET
Mr Collins, unfortunately it is incumbent on me to hint that the eldest Miss Bennet is - very soon to be engaged.

COLLINS
Engaged!

MRS BENNET
But Miss Elizabeth next to her in both age and beauty would make anyone an excellent partner. Do not you agree, Mr Collins?

Mr Collins looks through the doorway at Elizabeth

COLLINS
Indeed. Indeed. A very agreeable alternative.

39 EXT. BACK MEADOW - LONGBOURN - DAY. 39

Elizabeth and Jane are walking towards the house when, across the moat, they see Mr Collins come out of the house and advance towards them.

ELIZABETH
Oh no!

Mr Collins spots them and darts through a door in the garden wall and hurries towards the bridge to meet them.

ELIZABETH
Quick! This way!

She pulls Jane across the duck board spanning the moat, through the house and out the front.

Mr Collins doubles back and follows them into the house. The girls are no-where to be seen. He looks around, puzzled.

40 EXT. MERYTON VILLAGE - DAY. 40

Elizabeth and Jane arrive in the village. Jane, forever the dutiful daughter, looks uneasy. Elizabeth is flushed and reckless. She looks behind them.

ELIZABETH
(laughs)
We've lost him.

They slow down to a walk. And then stop. Outside the milliner's shop the incorrigible Lydia and Kitty are chatting to Wickham, the dashing young officer we spotted earlier. He is utterly gorgeous - slim, handsome, tousled hair. The perfect romantic hero.

ELIZABETH
Kitty? Lydia!

She and Jane join them.

LYDIA
We just happened to be looking for some ribbon, didn't we, Kitty?
(Kitty nods)
And we met Mr Wickham.

KITTY
He picked up Lydia's gloves!

LYDIA
He's a lieutenant!

Wickham bows.

WICKHAM
I'm enchanted. Shall we all look at some ribbons together?

LYDIA
Oh yes!

41 INT. MILLINER'S SHOP - DAY. 41

They come into the shop. The others go towards the counter. Wickham hangs back, and smiles a complicit, witty smile at Elizabeth. She colours.

WICKHAM
Though I must warn you, I have very poor taste.

ELIZABETH
(smiles)
Only a man truly confident of himself would admit that.

WICKHAM
No, it's true. My rooms in town, decorated, I thought, in the height of fashion, have reduced grown men to tears of mirth.

ELIZABETH
(laughs)
Then why don't you change them?

MR WICKHAM
And deny people such pleasure?

ELIZABETH
So you don't mind being laughed at?

MR WICKHAM
Not particularly.

ELIZABETH
It is a somewhat sterile quality, is it not, to be aware of ones importance in the world.

WICKHAM
Especially if, like me, one has none.

Elizabeth looks at him with interest. A beat. The moment is broken by Lydia coming up.

LYDIA
Lizzie, please lend me some money!

ELIZABETH
You already owe me a considerable sum, Liddy.

MR WICKHAM
Allow me to oblige.

ELIZABETH
No! Please - Mr Wickham! -

Wickham gives Elizabeth a smile and moves away to the counter.

42 EXT. MILLINER'S SHOP - DAY. 42

The girls emerge from the shop with Wickham.

ELIZABETH
You're too generous.

WICKHAM
I know. Fivepence halfpenny!

ELIZABETH
It all adds up.

LYDIA
I'll pay him back.

WICKHAM
Oh yes. I'll make sure of that.

They laugh. Elizabeth is really rather taken with him. They walk down the street.

ELIZABETH
Will you be stationed here all winter, Mr Wickham?

WICKHAM
That depends on what the French have in mind. Of course I look forward to action...
(smiles at her)
But on the other hand -

JANE
Lizzie - look!

They stop. Jane's face lights up.

JANE
Mr Bingley!

It is indeed Bingley, riding towards them. He is accompanied by Darcy.

Bingley jumps off his horse and hurries over to Jane. His open, friendly face is filled with delight.

BINGLEY
I was on my way to your house.

LYDIA
Please Mr Bingley, when are you going to give a ball?

JANE
Lydia!

BINGLEY
I was just waiting until your sister was quite well.

LYDIA
She is!

Elizabeth pays no attention to the following conversation, instead she is looking at Darcy who, in turn, is staring at Wickham. They both obviously recognize each other and look very uncomfortable.

KITTY
- when, then?

MR BINGLEY
As soon as they have made the white soup.

LYDIA
Be sure to invite Mr Wickham.

Darcy turns and rides off without a word.

JANE
Lydia, you can't just say that -

MR BINGLEY
Will you excuse me ladies? Mr Wickham. Enjoy the day.

Elizabeth looks at Wickham, puzzled.

43 INT. DRAWING ROOM - THE LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY. 43

A small cards party is underway. Three tables have been set up. Elizabeth, Wickham, Jane, Lydia, Kitty, Charlotte and Sir William and Lady Lucas are present. A small number of officers and other ladies are also present. We move around the tables. Kitty is sat with Sir William and Charlotte and Mary. Jane sits at a table with Mr Collins and Lady Lucas. Lizzie sits with Lydia and two other officers. Lydia flirts outrageously.

LYDIA
We have asked mama if we might have new dresses for the Netherfield ball.

KITTY
Yes, white, they must be white.

LYDIA
White is the only colour to be worn this season.

SIR WILLIAM
So I believe.

Mr Collins is at a table with Lady Lucas, he glances over at Elizabeth, as he talks.

COLLINS
- of course, when you understand that Lady Catherine de Bourgh is its proprietor you will realise what an immense compliment that is. Lady Catherine spent eight hundred pounds on a chimney-piece alone.

Wickham who has been talking to some of the other officers comes and sits beside Elizabeth, passing by Mr collins on the way.

WICKHAM
(aside to Elizabeth)
Your cousin is blessed with an uncommon capacity for charm.

Elizabeth laughs and plays a hand.

LYDIA
Will you be attending the Netherfield ball, Mr Wickham?

WICKHAM
I hope to.
(to Elizabeth)
How long has Mr Darcy been a guest a Netherfield?

Elizabeth pounces on this reference to Mr Darcy and takes her chance.

ELIZABETH
About a month. Are you acquainted with, Mr Darcy?

WICKHAM
Indeed, my fate has been very intimate with that gentleman. I have been connected with his family since infancy.

Elizabeth is genuinely surprised, there is a pause while she is forced to play her hand.

WICKHAM (CONT'D)
You may well be surprised, Miss Bennet, especially given the cold manner of our intimacy this afternoon. Are you well acquainted with that gentleman?

ELIZABETH
As much as I could ever wish to be. I have spent four days in the same house as him, and I think him very disagreeable.

WICKHAM
I cannot pretend to be sorry.

Elizabeth blushes.

WICKHAM
But really I speak out of turn.

Collins voice breaks the moment.

COLLINS
Miss Elizabeth, I was just saying to Sir William what appalling weather we've been having.

Elizabeth cannot believe her misfortune in Mr Collins, but she smiles politely.

ELIZABETH
I think I shall take a little air.

She rises and walks through the room towards a balcony. As she passes the other tables we follow and witness snippets of their conversations.

CHARLOTTE
(to Mary)
It seems Mr Wickham has met with universal approval. Though Lizzie looks singularly pleased with him.

MARY
At the moment she has more suitors than sense.

Charlotte looks over at Mr Collins. Elizabeth passes Sir William's side of the table.

SIR WILLIAM
Now any one for a round of bridge? Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH
Really I need to take some air.

Mr Collins makes his way to join Elizabeth.

SIR WILLIAM
Mr Collins?

COLLINS
Oh, I am not so familiar with the game, Sir William.

SIR WILLIAM
Absolute nonsense. I insist that you join us.

CHARLOTTE
Please, Mr Collins, I'd be happy if you'd partner me.

Collins resigns himself to his fate. Elizabeth smiles and slips out into the night air.

44 EXT. BALCONY - THE LUCASES HOUSE - MERYTON - NIGHT. 44

Elizabeth breathes in the cold night air. She senses someone join her. She looks round to see Wickham has followed her as she had hoped.

ELIZABETH
I hope your plans in favor of Meryton will not be affected by your difficult relations with the gentleman we were just speaking of.

WICKHAM
Oh no - it is not for me to be driven away. If he wishes to avoid seeing me, he must go not I.

Pause.

ELIZABETH
I must ask you Mr Wickham, what is the manner of your disapproval of Mr Darcy?

WICKHAM
Do you really want to hear?

Lizzie nods.

WICKHAM
He ruined me.

She stares at him.

ELIZABETH
How so?

WICKHAM
My father managed his estate. We grew up together, Darcy and I. His father treated me like a second son. Oh he was the kindest of men and bequeathed me the best living in his gift, for I had my heart set on joining the church. But when he died Darcy ignored his wishes and gave the living to another man.

LIZZIE
Why did he do that?

WICKHAM
Out of jealousy, for his father loved me more than he loved him.

LIZZIE
How cruel! Are you sure?

WICKHAM
(nods)
And out of pride, for he considered me too lowly to be worth his consideration.

Pause. Lizzie gazes at him with horror and sympathy.

45 INT. BEDROOMS - LONGBOURNE - THE SAME. 45

We pan through the bedrooms as the Bennet girls prepare for the Netherfield ball. Kitty is helping Lydia into her dress, they are both wearing white.

LYDIA
Aggghh!

KITTY
Breathe in!

We move to the quieter preparations of Jane and Elizabeth. This conversation has been going on for some time.

JANE
(horrified)
- I still think there must have been a misunderstanding.

LIZZIE
(exasperated laugh)
Oh Jane, do you never think ill of anybody?

JANE
How could Mr Darcy do such a thing? I will discover the truth from Mr Bingley at the ball this evening.

ELIZABETH
If it is not true let Mr Darcy contradict it himself. But until he does, I hope never to encounter him.

JANE
Poor, unfortunate Mr Wickham.

ELIZABETH
On the contrary, he is twice the man Darcy is.

JANE
And lets hope for you a rather more willing dancer.

Jane leaves Elizabeth, at the mirror, taking very particular care of her makeup. She smiles to herself.

46 INT. NETHERFIELD - HERTFORDSHIRE - NIGHT. 46

The great doors of Netherfield open to reveal the ball in full swing. Compared to the somewhat clod-hopping Assembly, it's a dazzling affair.

There are hundreds of guests. All the women, roughly two hundred, are dressed in white. The men are either in red officer uniform or dressed in black and white. There are a number of rooms each occupied by a different activity, cards, buffet, women's closet. The final and grandest room is the ball room, a swirl of elegant dance.

The Bennet's enter the first reception room, the girls, including Mrs Bennet, are all dressed in white. Mr Collins is slightly detained as people pass. Mr Bingley bounds up to Jane.

BINGLEY
You're here! I'm so pleased.

JANE
And so am I.

BINGLEY
How are you, Miss Elizabeth?

Elizabeth is not paying attention, instead she is searching over Mr Bingleys' shoulder for a sight of Wickham.

BINGLEY
Are you, looking for someone?

ELIZABETH
No, no not at all. Admiring the splendor of the ball.

JANE
It is lovely, Mr Bingley.

Bingley and Jane move off leaving Elizabeth with Mrs Bennet and others. While Mrs Bennet talks we focus on Elizabeth searching the sea of red coats.

MRS BENNET
(refering to Jane and Bingley)
I dare say I have never met a more pleasant gentleman in all my years. Look how he dotes on her! Still Jane has always done what is best for her family.

Elizabeth takes this opportunity to slip away into the next room. Elizabeth looks around but cannot see Mr Wickham. Suddenly she thinks she sees him, so starts to move over. The man turns round, it is not Wickham but someone else.

Elizabeth walks nonchanantly into the next room, again looking for Mr Wickham. She cranes around trying to see him then she is suddenly surprised by Charlotte Lucas.

ELIZABETH
Have you seen Mr Wickham.

She shakes her head.

CHARLOTTE
Perhaps he is in the ballroom.

They both walk into the ball room. We pull back to reveal a sea of dancers. Wickham is nowhere to be seen. Jane appears and catches Elizabeths arm.

JANE
He's not here. Apparently otherwise detained.

The disappointment is palpable on Elizabeth's face.

ELIZABETH
Detained?

Mr Collins arrives, breathless. He smiles eagerly at Elizabeth.

COLLINS
There you are.

ELIZABETH
Mr Collins. What a pleasant surprise.

MR COLLINS
Perhaps you will do me the honour, Miss Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH
Oh. I didn't think you danced, Mr Collins.

MR COLLINS
I do not consider it incompatible with the office of a clergyman to indulge in such an innocent diversion.

Elizabeth tries to smile, politely.

MR COLLINS (CONT'D)
In fact several people, her ladyship included, have complimented me on my lightness of foot.

Elizabeth's face is a matey rictus.

CUT TO:

They dance, the style of which is not unlike English Country dancing.

COLLINS
To be sure, dancing is of little consequence to me, but it does afford the opportunity to lavish ones partner with delicate attentions which is my primary object of the evening.

Elizabeth turns as part of the dance and for a moment she dances beside Jane.

JANE
Apparently your Mr Wickham has been called on some business to town, though my informer told me he would have been less inclined to be engaged had it not been for the presence at Netherfield of a certain gentleman.

Jane indicates towards where Darcy stands watching them.

ELIZABETH
That gentleman barely warrants the name.

The dance leads Elizabeth back to Mr Collins.

COLLINS (CONT'D)
It is my intention, if I may be so bold to remain close to you throughout the evening.

CUT TO:

Couples are preparing for the next dance. Elizabeth and Charlotte are standing to one side when Mr Darcy approaches.

DARCY
May I have the next dance, Miss Elizabeth.

Elizabeth is stunned.

ELIZABETH
You may.

Darcy walks away.

ELIZABETH
What was I thinking? Have I no presence of mind?!

CHARLOTTE
I dare say you will find him very agreeable, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH
Heaven forbid! That would be the greatest misfortune of all - to find a man agreeable whom one is determined to hate!

CUT TO:

Elizabeth dances face to face with Darcy. Neither can speak. They dance for a moment in silence.

ELIZABETH
I do love a Sarabande.

DARCY
Indeed. Most invigorating.

They continue, for a moment, in silence.

ELIZABETH
It is your turn to say something, Mr Darcy - I talked about the dance, now you ought to remark on the size of the room or the number of couples.

DARCY
I am perfectly happy to oblige, please advise me of what you would like most to hear.

ELIZABETH
That reply will do for the present. Perhaps by and bye I may observe that private balls are much pleasanter than public ones. But for now we may be silent.

DARCY
Do you talk as a rule while dancing?

ELIZABETH
We are each of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room, and be handed down to posterity with all the eclat of a proverb. So a little lubrication to avoid embarrassment might be advantageous.

DARCY
I see no striking resemblance of your own character in this, how near it is to mine I cannot say. (beat) Tell me do you and your sisters very often walk to Meryton?

They are suddenly parted by the choreography of the dance.

We stay with Elizabeth who is whisked round the floor by an elderly man who smiles at her toothlessly, Elizabeth looks back at Darcy who is dancing with Lydia. He stare at Elizabeth as he dances. Elizabeth smiles at her current partner in embarrassment.

ELIZABETH
Very mild weather we've been having.

DANCING PARTNER
(deaf as a post)
Sorry.

The dance spins again and she is back with Darcy.

ELIZABETH
Yes, we often walk to Meryton - it is a great opportunity to meet new people. In fact when you met us we had just had the pleasure of forming a new acquaintance.

DARCY
I will admit your Mr Wickham is blessed with such happy manners as may ensure his making friends - whether he is capable of retaining them is less certain.

ELIZABETH
He has been so unlucky as to lose your friendship. I remember hearing you once say that your resentment once created was unappeasable. You are very cautious, I suppose, as to its being created?

DARCY
I am. May I ask to what these questions tend.

ELIZABETH
To make out your character, Mr Darcy.

DARCY
And what have you discovered?

ELIZABETH
Very little.

The dance finishes.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I hear such different accounts of you as puzzle me exceedingly.

DARCY
I hope to afford you more clarity in the future.

They bow to each other and Elizabeth moves quickly away from Darcy.

CUT TO:

Elizabeth is at the buffet watching Kitty quaff a huge glass of wine and having the glass immediately refilled. She is joined by Caroline Bingley who also looks at Kitty disapprovingly.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Miss Elizabeth. Let me recommend you as a friend not to give too much confidence to all of the assertions your friend Mr Wickham might make. He is indeed a charming man, but one should never forget from where he is descended.

ELIZABETH
His lack of trustworthiness and descent appear by your account to be the same thing.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
Please excuse my interterence, it was kindly meant.

A breathless Mr Collins appears.

COLLINS
Is that Mr Darcy, of Pemberley in Derbyshire?

ELIZABETH
I believe so.

COLLINS
But I must make myself known to him immediately!

ELIZABETH
But sir -

COLLINS
He is the nephew of my esteemed patroness, Lady Catherine.

ELIZABETH
(surprised)
He is?

Mr Collins starts making his way determinedly towards Darcy.

ELIZABETH
Please, Mr Collins! He'll consider it an impertinence -

Elizabeth watches from a distance, with acute embarrassment, as Collins interrupts Darcy. Darcy does not notice him so Collins raises his voice.

COLLINS (CONT'D)
Mr Darcy!

The room around him stops. Darcy is surprised and turns round. In dumbshow we see Darcy is horrified by Collins' obsequiousness, during the conversation Collins points Elizabeth out to Darcy.

CAROLINE BINGLEY
What interesting relatives you have, Miss Bennet.

Elizabeth walks away into another room.

CUT TO:

The other room, where Mary is singing badly at the piano. Elizabeth is horrified. She turns to leave only to see Mr Bennet looking on. He winces as Mary misses a high note. Mary finishes the song with an off key flourish. Polite applause. Mary smiles and prepares for another song.

ELIZABETH
Aren't you going to do something?

Mr Bennet walks over to the piano.

MR BENNET
Mary dear, you've delighted us long enough.

MARY
But they asked for another song.

Mr Bennet shuts the lid.

MR BENNET
Let the other young ladies have a turn.

CUT TO:

Later. Charlotte and Lizzie are sat together.

ELIZABETH
Perhaps my family have made a competition to see who can expose themselves to the most ridicule.

CHARLOTTE
Well, at least Bingley has not noticed.

They look over and see Jane and Bingley dancing. Bingley clearly besotted by Jane.

ELIZABETH
Yes. I think he likes her very much.

CHARLOTTE
But does she like him? There are few of us who are secure enough to be really in love without proper encouragement. Bingley likes her enormously but might not do more if she does not help him on.

ELIZABETH
She is just shy and modest. If he does not perceive her regard he is a fool.

CHARLOTTE
We are all fools in love. He does not know her character as we do. She should move fast. Snap him up. There is plenty of time for us to get to know them *after* we're married -

Elizabeth looks over the dancefloor to see Lydia dancing with a soldier. She's a little drunk, and *very* flirtatious. He says something; she shrieks with laughter.

CUT TO:

47 MONTAGE OF THE BALL 47

Elizabeth sits at the side of the dance-floor. She looks at Mrs Bennet dancing in outrageous fashion. Cut to later: Lydia is getting more and more leery with a group of soldiers, Elizabeth walks away in embarrasment only to see Mr Collins smiling at her from across the room. Cut to: Elizabeth dancing joylessly with the excruciating Mr Collins, as she turns in the dance she sees Darcy look on with obvious disdain. Cut to: much later, the band are exhausted, guests are leaving. The staff are asleep on their feet. Elizabeth almost alone watching her parents dancing almost the only people left on the dance floor, Kitty is asleep over Elizabeth's lap. This is a never-ending nightmare.

48 INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NETHERFIELD - THE WEE HOURS 48

Day light creeps through the curtains. Mrs Bennet is sprawled on a sofa. Lydia completely drunk. Kitty asleep. Jane sitting demurely. Collins looking longingly at Elizabeth. Mrs Bennet is holding court, whilst the footmen behind are literally ready to drop. Bingley is standing, the perfect host, but obviously willing the Bennets to leave.

MRS BENNET
I have never had such a good time in my life. Mr Bingley you must have such a ball once a month at least.

Caroline who is standing with her brother, yawns ostentatiously.

ELIZABETH
Mother. I really think it is time to go.

MRS BENNET
Don't be impertinent. Our hosts are perfectly happy with our company, are you not, Mr Bingley? I hope I can entice you to Longbourn to sample our hospitality. We would make sure you had 3 or 4 courses at least.

She holds out her glass for a top up and carries on.

MRS BENNET (CONT'D)
So tell me Mr Bingley. Whom did you like least of all your guests this evening?

ELIZABETH
Really. This is enough.

Darcy looking down at Elizabeth from a staircase. He turns and walks away.

49 INT. CARRIAGE - HERTFORDSHIRE - MORNING. 49

The Bennet's are squeezed into their carriage. It is light outside. Only Mrs Bennet is awake but the lack of an audience does not stop her from talking.

MRS BENNET
Allowing for new carriages, dresses etcetera, etcetera. We will be having a wedding here at Netherfield in less than three months, if you ask me. Mr Bennet? Mr Bennet!

50 INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - LONGBOURNE - DAY. 50

The Bennets eat in silence. Jane yawns. Mrs Bennet moans - she is hungover. Mr Collins comes in in a state of agitation. They look at him. He sits, hesitates, then asks:

MR COLLINS
Mrs Bennet - I was hoping, if it would not trouble you, that I might solicit a private audience with Miss Elizabeth in the course of the morning.

Elizabeth is open mouthed.

MRS BENNET
Oh! Yes. Certainly - Lizzy would be very happy indeed. Please - go ahead. No time like the present. Everyone. Out. Mr Collins would like a private audience with your sister.

Everyone looks in amazement.

ELIZABETH
Wait. I beg you. Mr Collins can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear.

MRS BENNET
No. Nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are. Everyone else, to the drawing room. Mr Bennet.

MR BENNET
But...

MRS BENNET
Now!

Mrs Bennet makes sure everyone leaves, winks at Mr Collins then shuts the door before Elizabeth has time to do anything. Elizabeth looks at Mr Collins who looks at her in earnest. There is a horrible pause of intense embarrassment.

MR COLLINS
Dear Miss Elizabeth, you can hardly doubt the purpose of my discourse. My attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life.

Elizabeth stares at him, astonished.

MR COLLINS
But before I am run away with my feelings perhaps I may state my reasons for marrying. Firstly, that it is the duty of a clergyman to set the example of matrimony in his parish.
(MORE)

MR COLLINS (cont'd)
Secondly, that I am convinced it will add greatly to my happiness, and, thirdly, that it is at the urging of my esteemed patroness Lady Catherine that I select a wife.

We here a kick and Kitty screach from behind the door.

MRS BENNET (V.O.)
Sshhh.

MR COLLINS
My object in coming to Longbourn was to choose such a one from amongst Mr Bennet's daughters, for as you know I am next in the entail of the estate and such an alliance will surely make amends for this.
(drops to his knee)
And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affections.

ELIZABETH
Mr Collins -

MR COLLINS
And that no reproach on the subject of fortune will cross my lips once we are married.

ELIZABETH
You are too hasty, sir! You forget that I have made no answer.

MR COLLINS
(unperturbed)
I must add, that Lady Catherine will thoroughly approve, when I speak to her of your modesty, economy and other amiable qualities.

ELIZABETH
Sir, I am honoured by your proposal, but regret I must decline it.

MR COLLINS
(momentarily taken aback, but recovering)
I know ladies have their pretty little ways, and don't seek to seem too eager -

ELIZABETH
(in some desperation)
Mr Collins, I am perfectly serious. You could not make me happy and I'm convinced I'm the last woman in the world who could make *you* happy.

MR COLLINS
(pause)
I flatter myself, cousin, that your refusal is merely a natural delicacy. Besides, you should take into account that despite your manifold attractions it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you -

ELIZABETH
(rising, deeply affronted)
Mr Collins -

MR COLLINS
So I must conclude that you simply seek to increase my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females.

ELIZABETH
Sir! I am not the sort of female to torment a respectable man. Please understand me - I cannot accept you!

Elizabeth storms out of the room and out of the house. Mrs Bennet crashes in through another door, hot on the tail of Elizabeth.

MRS BENNET
Declined indeed! The headstrong, foolish child-

COLLINS
Thank you, but... Head strong?

MRS BENNET
- we shall have this little hiccup dealt with immediately, Mr Collins.

Mrs Bennet goes chases after Elizabeth. Mr Collins watches through a window as Elizabeth is chased by her mother.

51 INT. LIBRARY - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 51

Mrs Bennet marches into the library. Mr Bennet looks up in shock.

MRS BENNET
Oh Mr Bennet. We are all in a uproar. You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr Collins, for she vows she will not have him.

Mr Bennet startes at Mrs Bennet blankley.

MRS BENNET
Mr Collins, Mr Collins has proposed to Lizzie. But Lizzy declares she will not have him, and now the danger is Mr Collins may not have Lizzy.

MR BENNET
And what am I to do?

Mrs Bennet drags Mr Bennet to his feet.

MRS BENNET
Speak to Lizzy.

They march to find Elizabeth.

52 INT. HALLWAY - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 52

Mr Bennet and Mrs Bennet confront Elizabeth, who has been waiting in the hallway. Perhaps the other girls form an audience from the stairs, Mr Collins looks on sheepishly from the breakfast room.

MRS BENNET
Tell her that you insist upon them marrying.

LIZZIE
Papa, please - !

MRS BENNET
You will have this house! -

LIZZIE
I can't marry him!

MRS BENNET
You'll save your sisters from destitution!

LIZZIE
I can't! -

MRS BENNET
Go back now and say you've changed your mind!

LIZZIE
No!

MRS BENNET
Think of your family!

LIZZIE
You can't make me!

MRS BENNET
Mr Bennet, say something!

MR BENNET
(to Lizzie)
So, your mother insists on you marrying Mr Collins -

MRS BENNET
Yes, or I shall never see her again!

MR BENNET
Well, Lizzie. From this day on you must be a stranger to one of your parents -

MRS BENNET
(to Lizzie)
- who will maintain you when your father is dead?

MR BENNET
Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*.

MRS BENNET
Mr Bennet!

ELIZABETH
Thank you, papa.

Elizabeth turns around and walks into the drawing room.

53 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - THE SAME 53

Elizabeth enters the drawing room. In the drawing room, Mary is trying to read, through the family din. Jane sits very still. Her face is white. There's a letter in her hand. Mrs Bennet charges in, Lydia and Kitty in tow, and speaks to anyone who will listen.

MRS BENNET
Oh, ungrateful child! I shall never speak to her again! Not that I have much pleasure in talking to anybody. People who suffer as I do from nervous complaints can have no inclination for talking. Nobody can tell what I suffer...

She jabbers on but her voice fades. We're with Jane, re-reading the letter.

ELIZABETH
What's wrong, Jane?

Close on Jane's pale face. She's staring at the letter.

MRS BENNET
(distant)
But it is always so. Those who complain are never pitied...

54 EXT. NETHERFIELD - DAY. 54

Bingley, Caroline and Darcy sit grimly in a carriage which drives off.

55 INT. CARRIAGE - LEAVING NETHERFIELD - THE SAME. 55

Darcy looks severe and stern, Caroline can't help a little smirk on her face. Bingley looks back longingly.

56 INT. BEDROOM - LONGBOURNE - NIGHT. 56

Elizabeth and Jane in bed.

ELIZABETH
I don't understand. What would take him from Netherfield? Why would he not know when he was to return?

JANE
I have no reserves from you.

Jane passes Elizabeth the letter.

ELIZABETH
"Mr Darcy is impatient to see his sister and we are scarcely less eager to meet her again. I really do not think Georgina Darcy has her equal for beauty, elegance and accomplishments, so much so I must hope to hereafter call her my sister. It is my duty to indulge you in no hope in this respect for your own self."

JANE
Is that not clear enough?

ELIZABETH
Miss Bingley sees that her brother is in love with you and is gone with him to persuade him otherwise.

JANE
But I know her to be incapable of wilfully deceiving anyone.

ELIZABETH
He loves you, Jane. Do not give up. Go to our aunt and uncle's in London.
(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)
Let it be known you are there and I am sure he will come to you.

57 EXT. LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 57

Jane is in a carriage. Mrs Bennet kisses her goodbye through the window as all the Bennets look on.

MRS BENNET
Give my love to my sister. And try not to be so much of a burden, dear.

Jane's carriage moves away and the family wave. Mr Bennet talks to Elizabeth.

MR BENNET
Poor Jane. However, a girl likes to be crossed in love now and then. It gives her something to think of, and a sort of distinction among her companions.

ELIZABETH
(dryly)
I'm sure that will cheer her up, Papa.

MR BENNET
It's your turn now, Lizzie. Since you've turned down Mr Collins you're free to go off and be jilted yourself. What about Mr Wickham? He is a pleasant fellow and would do the job credibly.

ELIZABETH
Thank you, but a less agreeable man would satisfy me. We must not all expect Jane's good fortune.

MR BENNET
Still, it's a comfort to know that whatever might befall you, you have an affectionate mother who will be sure to make the most of it.

A small smile from Elizabeth.

58 INT. BEDROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY 58

Elizabeth is making the bed and tidying Jane's belongings. There is a knock at the door and Charlotte enters.

CHARLOTTE
My dear Elizabeth, I've come here to tell you the news.

ELIZABETH
What news?

CHARLOTTE
(defiantly)
Mr Collins and I are engaged to be married.

A stunned pause.

ELIZABETH
Engaged?

CHARLOTTE
(timidly)
You don't mind, do you?

ELIZABETH
No, no...
(tries to recover)
Of course not.

CHARLOTTE
He asked for my hand this morning ...and I accepted him.

Elizabeth looks quite faint. Charlotte sits on the bed. Elizabeth, after a pause, sits down beside her.

CHARLOTTE
I can see you're surprised - coming so soon after his wishing to marry you...

ELIZABETH
(weakly)
No...

CHARLOTTE
I'm not a romantic, you know. I ask only a comfortable home, and considering Mr Collin's character, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can hope for.

ELIZABETH
And that's all you expect?

CHARLOTTE
For women in our situation, what choice is there?

ELIZABETH
(passionately)
Don't speak like that, Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE
- to become an old maid, at best tolerated, at worst a burden, dependent on the kindness of others? Or to seek the protection of marriage.

ELIZABETH
And we only have two choices?

CHARLOTTE
Yes.

An appalled silence. Elizabeth gazes at her closest friend. Charlotte has recovered herself. She now looks cool and composed - unnervingly so.

ELIZABETH
You can still change your mind, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
(shakes her head)
I'm twenty-seven years old.

We hear the sound of the militia drums...

59 EXT. MERYTON - DAY. 59

The militia are leaving Meryton. Hundreds of soldiers and officers in the red coats marching out of the village to the sound of pipes and drums. The villagers are out to bid them farewell. Lydia and Kitty run through the crowds very distraught. They find Elizabeth coming in the other direction.

LYDIA
It's too dreadful! They're leaving for Brighton.

ELIZABETH
All of them?

KITTY
They got the call this morning.

LYDIA
Not a word of warning!

Lydia wails. Elizabeth searches the red coats for Wickham. She spots him, he glances across at her, she gives a pathetic wave and he's gone. Lydia and Kitty chase the last of the officers, leaving Elizabeth alone. She walks into the post office.

60 INT. VILLAGE POST OFFICE - THE SAME. 6

The Postmaster hands a letter to Elizabeth. Elizabeth opens it and reads it.

POSTMASTER
Bad news, Miss?

ELIZABETH
It could not be worse. I have been invited to possibly the very last place on earth I would like to go.

61 EXT. MERYTON - DAY. 61

Elizabeth comes out of the post office to reveal...

Time has passed, the now deserted village is covered in a thick blanket of snow. A lonely Elizabeth walks away totally despondent.

62 EXT. HUNSFORD PARSONAGE - KENT - DAY. 6

Charlotte's new home is a smallish but charming rectory in Kent. Charlotte greets Elizabeth, kissing her warmly. Mr Collins bows as he ushers her in.

MR COLLINS
Welcome to our humble abode...

63 EXT. HUNSFORD PARSONAGE-- DAY. 63

There is a coop containing hens of various descriptions...a pig-stye...a vegetable patch...a rose bower. Charlotte and Mr Collins are showing Elizabeth round the place.

MR COLLINS
(pointing)
And from here we have a good view of Rosings Park, where we are honoured to dine at least twice a week. Her ladyship's carriage is regularly ordered for us. I *should* say, one of her ladyship's carriages, for she has several.

CHARLOTTE
My dear, I think our guest is tired after her journey. Come on, Lizzie, let's get some tea.

MR COLLINS
My wife encourages me to spend as much time in the garden as possible, for the sake of my health.

A beat. Lizzie glances at Charlotte, who remains impassive.

MR COLLINS
I plan many improvements, of course.
(points to house)
I intend to throw out a bow there, and plant a lime walk.
(sharp look at Lizzie)
Oh yes, I flatter myself that any young lady would be happy to be the mistress of such a house.

A tiny nod from Elizabeth. She understands perfectly.

64 INT. CHARLOTTE'S PARLOUR - HUNSFORD - DAY. 64

Lizzie and Charlotte are at last alone. They sit down, with a certain relief, in a charming little parlour that faces the front of the house. Charlotte pours out tea.

CHARLOTTE
We shall not be disturbed here, for this parlour is for my own particular use.
(a beat)
Oh Lizzie, it's such a pleasure, to run my own home!

A flash of understanding between them.

MR COLLINS (OOV)
Charlotte! Come here!

Charlotte jumps up and rushes to the window.

ELIZABETH
(alarmed)
What's happened?

MR COLLINS (OOV)
Charlotte!

ELIZABETH
(jumps up)
Has the pig escaped?

Lizzie joins her at the window. Outside in the lane, Mr Collins stands, bowing, at a carriage.

CHARLOTTE
It's all right. It's just Lady Catherine.

They both burst out laughing. Just for a moment, the atmosphere is eased.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Tell me, how are things concerning Mr Wickham?

Elizabeth's face changes.

ELIZABETH
I have not heard from Mr Wickham since the regiment left for Brighton, but I am informed by Lydia who keeps a breast of all matters military that he does very well.

CHARLOTTE
Oh Lizzie.

We hear Mr Collins rushing back into the house, and running up the stairs.

COLLINS (O.S.)
Great news! Great news!

He comes into the room, breathlessly excited.

COLLINS (CONT'D)
We have an invitation to visit Rosings this evening from Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

Elizabeth is not overcome with enthusiasm.

COLLINS (CONT'D)
Do not make yourself uneasy, my dear cousin, about your apparel. Just put on that which is best among your clothes and Lady Catherine will not think the worse of you.

65 EXT. GROUNDS OF ROSINGS - EVENING. 65

Elizabeth, Charlotte and Mr Collins walk hurriedly across the lawns towards the great house. Beyond the toparied hedges the grey building looms ominously above them. It is grand without being elegant.

COLLINS
One of the most extraordinary sights in all Europe, is it not. The glazing alone cost upwards of twenty thousand pounds.

66 INT. STAIRWAY - ROSINGS - THE SAME. 66

Mr Collins, Charlotte and Elizabeth are led up a vast stairway which is painted with visions of hell. Elizabeth stops in front of a painting of a devil. She stares at it. It seem to speak, but she realizes the voice is Collins chiding her.

COLLINS
(as the devil)
This way!

67 INT. SALON - ROSINGS - DUSK. 67

The salon at Rosings is spectacularly grand; hideously so. Heavy furniture, rows of servants. The three guests are shown in by the footman. Again Mr Collins scrapes the floor with his bow.

MR COLLINS
Your Ladyship.
(to the daughter)
Miss de Bourg.

Lady Catherine is a haughty, bossy woman. Pretty unspeakable, really. Her daughter is a sickly, irritable-looking creature.

LADY CATHERINE
So you are Elizabeth Bennet.

ELIZABETH
I am, your ladyship.

LADY CATHERINE
(looking her up and down)
Hmm.
(indicates her daughter)
This is my daughter.

CHARLOTTE
(eagerly)
It's very kind of you to ask us to dine, Lady Catherine.

Lady Catherine ignores her.

MR COLLINS
(whispers to Lizzie)
The chimneypiece alone cost £400.

But Lizzie doesn't hear. Darcy walks into the room. Lizzie freezes. When he sees Lizzie he, too, falters, and recovers himself. Another man (Fitzwilliam) is with him.

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy! What are you doing here?

MR COLLINS
Mr Darcy!
(another deep bow)
I had no idea we would have the honour...

A stiff bow from Darcy, who looks at Mr Collins as if he's something brought in by the dog. He turns to Lizzie, trying to collect himself.

DARCY
(bows)
Miss Bennet...I'm staying here.

LADY CATHERINE
(surprised)
You know my nephew?

ELIZABETH
Yes, madam, I had the pleasure of meeting him in Hertfordshire.

Darcy's friend Fitzwilliam, a much more easy-going chap, introduces himself.

FITZWILLIAM
Colonel Fitzwilliam. How do you do?

He bows. Lizzie returns his smile gratefully. They move towards the dining room. Mr Collins leans towards Lizzie.

MR COLLINS
(whispering)
You know Mr Darcy is as good as engaged to Miss de Bourg?

ELIZABETH
Really? Miss Bingley will be disappointed to hear that.
(looks at the girl, and whispers to Charlotte)
What a sickly, cross little thing! Oh yes, they should suit each other very well.

Charlotte smiles back, a little fearfully. She's more intimidated by Rosings than Elizabeth is, and indeed has more at stake.

68 INT. DINING ROOM - ROSINGS - NIGHT. 6

The dining room is laid for a very grand dinner - footmen waiting, thousands of candles.

Lady Catherine seats herself at the head of the table. The guests wait for their orders.

LADY CATHERINE
You sit there and you sit there. Mr Collins! You can't sit next to your wife!

After some awkward shuffling around they all sit down. Lizzie, much to her discomfort, finds herself sitting next to Darcy. There is a pause.

MR DARCY
I trust your family is in good health, Miss Bennet?

ELIZABETH
They are, thank you.
(pause)
My eldest sister is currently in London, perhaps you happened to see her there?

MR DARCY
(awkward pause)
I haven't been fortunate enough, no.

Lizzie looks at him. He colours slightly. Lady Catherine addresses Lizzie in a loud voice, from the head of the table.

LADY CATHERINE
Do you play the pianoforte, Miss Bennet?

ELIZABETH
A little, ma'am, and very poorly.

LADY CATHERINE
Oh. Do you draw?

ELIZABETH
No, not at all.

LADY CATHERINE
Your sisters, do they draw?

ELIZABETH
Not one.

LADY CATHERINE
That is very strange. But I suppose you had no opportunity. Your mother should have taken you to town every spring for the benefit of the masters.

ELIZABETH
My mother would have no objection but my father hates London.

LADY CATHERINE
Has your governess left you?

ELIZABETH
We never had a governess.

Mr Collins squirms in embarrassment. Darcy watches Elizabeth, keenly.

LADY CATHERINE
No governess? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess, I never heard such a thing! Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education.

ELIZABETH
(can't help smiling at this)
Not at all, Lady Catherine.

LADY CATHERINE
Mmmm. Are any of your younger sisters out?

ELIZABETH
Yes, ma'am. All.

LADY CATHERINE
All! What, five out at once? Very odd! And you only the second - the younger ones out before the elders are married! Your youngest sisters must be very young.

ELIZABETH
Yes, my youngest is not sixteen. But I think it would be very hard on younger sisters, not to have their share of amusement because the elder is still unmarried. And to be kept back on such a motive! It would hardly encourage sisterly affection.

LADY CATHERINE
Upon my word, you give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person. Pray, what is your age?

ELIZABETH
(smiles)
With three younger sisters grown up, your Ladyship can hardly expect me to own to it.

Lady Catherine looks astonished. Mr Collins shifts in his seat. Mr Darcy glances sharply - in fact, admiringly - at Lizzie. She's enjoying herself.

69 INT. DRAWING ROOM - ROSINGS - NIGHT. 69

Dinner is over and they are drinking coffee. Darcy moves towards Elizabeth but Lady Catherine interrupts, by shouting from her seat.

LADY CATHERINE
Come, Miss Bennet, and play for us!

ELIZABETH
No, I beg you -

LADY CATHERINE
For music is my delight. In fact there are few people in England who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient.
(indicates daughter)
So would Anne, if her health would have allowed her.

ELIZABETH
Please, I told you I play poorly -

MR COLLINS
(hisses)
Come come, Elizabeth, her ladyship demands it!

Lizzie reluctantly sits down at the piano and starts to play. Lady Catherine takes no notice and talks loudly over the music.

LADY CATHERINE
How does Georgina get along, Darcy?

DARCY
She plays very well.

LADY CATHERINE
I hope she practises. No excellence can be acquired without constant practice. I have told Mrs Collins this.
(turns to Charlotte)
Though you have no instrument of your own you are very welcome to come to Rosings and play on the piano in the housekeeper's room.

CHARLOTTE
Thank you, your ladyship.

LADY CATHERINE
You would be in nobody's way, you know, in that part of the house.

Darcy flinches at her bad manners. He moves away to the piano where Lizzie is playing - not that terribly well, it must be said. A moment passes.

ELIZABETH
You mean to frighten me, Mr Darcy, by coming in all your state to hear me, but I won't be alarmed even though your sister *does* play so well.

DARCY
I am well enough acquainted with you, Miss Bennet, to know I cannot alarm you even should I wish it.

A beat. They eye each other warily. Colonel Fitzwilliam joins them.

FITZWILLIAM
(indicating Darcy)
What was my friend like, in Hertfordshire?

ELIZABETH
You really care to know?

The colonel nods.

ELIZABETH
Prepare yourself for something very dreadful.
(stops playing)
The first time I saw him, at the Assembly, he danced with nobody at all - even though gentlemen were scarce and there was more than one young lady who was sitting down without a partner.

DARCY
(colouring)
I knew nobody beyond my own party.

ELIZABETH
(smiles sweetly)
True, and nobody can be introduced in a ballroom.

LADY CATHERINE
Fitzwilliam! Come here and talk to us!

Fitzwilliam moves away. Darcy and Elizabeth are alone.

DARCY
I do not have the talent of conversing easily with people I have never met before.

ELIZABETH
Maybe you should take your aunt's advice and practice.

Ouch! Darcy flinches. Lizzie turns away from him and carries on playing. Darcy gazes at the curve of her neck.

She plays a false note, stumbles, and grimly carries on.

70 INT. DRAWING ROOM - HUNSFORD - DAY. 70

Elizabeth is writing a letter in the drawing room. She starts "Dear Jane..." The doorbell rings in the background, she thinks nothing of it and continues. The maid opens the door to the drawing room and Mr Darcy enters.

ELIZABETH
(astonished)
Mr Darcy!

An awkward pause.

ELIZABETH
Please, do be seated.
(pause)
I'm afraid Mr and Mrs Collins are gone on business to the village.

A pause. What on earth does Mr Darcy want? He paces up and down.

DARCY
This is a charming house. I believe my aunt did a great deal to it when Mr Collins first arrived.

ELIZABETH
I believe so - and she could not have bestowed her kindness on a more grateful subject.

Another pause.

DARCY
Mr Collins seems very fortunate in his choice of wife.

ELIZABETH
He is indeed lucky to have found one of the few sensible women who would have accepted him.

Darcy sits down.

ELIZABETH
Shall I call for some tea?

DARCY
No. Thankyou.

The sound of the front door, and voices. Darcy jumps up.

DARCY
Good day, Miss Bennet. It's been a pleasure.

He bows to her and leaves. Elizabeth sits there, bemused and intrigued.

CUT TO:

Charlotte, in the hallway, taking off her bonnet. Darcy hurries past her, with a swift bow, and leaves abruptly. Charlotte gazes after him in surprise.

Charlotte heads to the drawing room where she finds Elizabeth sitting, bemused.

CHARLOTTE
What on earth have you done to poor Mr Darcy?

ELIZABETH
I have no idea.

She truly doesn't. Charlotte gives Elizabeth a look 73

71 EXT. HUNSFORD CHURCH - DAY. 71

Sunday service is over and worshippers are leaving the church. Mr Collins, in his vestments, obeises himself to Lady Catherine, who is sweeping out with her miserable-looking daughter and downtrodden governess. Elizabeth joins Colonel Fitzwilliam. They walk down the path together.

ELIZABETH
How long do you plan to stay in Kent, Colonel?

FITZWILLIAM
As long as Darcy chooses. I am at his disposal.

ELIZABETH
I do imagine your cousin brought you down with him chiefly to have someone to order around. I wonder he does not marry and secure a lasting convenience of that kind.

FITZWILLIAM
She would be a lucky woman.

ELIZABETH
Really?

FITZWILLIAM
Darcy is a most loyal companion. From what I heard, on our journey here, he recently came to the rescue of one of his friends just in time.

Darcy, waylaid by various people, comes out of the church. His eyes search for Elizabeth. He sees her with Fitzwilliam and hesitates. Too late! Mr Collins steps up to him and engages him in conversation. Elizabeth stops, at the churchyard gate.

ELIZABETH
What happened?

FITZWILLIAM
He saved the man from an imprudent marriage.

ELIZABETH
(faltering slightly)
Who was the man?

FITZWILLIAM
His closest friend. Mr Bingley.

A silence.

ELIZABETH
Did Mr Darcy give you his reasons for this interference?

FITZWILLIAM
There were apparently strong objections to the lady.

ELIZABETH
What kind of objections? Her lack of fortune?

FITZWILLIAM
I think it was her family that was considered unsuitable.

ELIZABETH
So he separated them?

FITZWILLIAM
I believe so. I know nothing else.

Elizabeth grows pale. She turns to look at Darcy who is joined by his aunt.

ELIZABETH
I wish Mr Darcy and all his friends well in finding partners suitable to their very high standards. Good morning, Col. Fitzwilliam.

76 Elizabeth see that Collinses are still busy with their parishioners and slips away. Darcy sees her from a distance. 76

72 EXT. ROSINGS PARK - DAY. 72

Lizzie walks across the park - anywhere, she hardly cares. She is in a turmoil of misery and fury. How could Darcy do such a terrible thing! It starts to rain.

CUT TO:

A Grecian summer house by the lake. The rain is now bucketing down. Lizzie hurries into the summer house and sits down, heavily, on a bench.

Her poor sister! Lizzie gazes in despair at the rain-lashed landscape.

A man approaches, across the park. He draws nearer.

It's Darcy. Elizabeth stiffens. He's hurrying towards her. Sodden, breathless, he comes into the summer house. He is in a state of agitation - far too agitated to notice her upset face.

DARCY
Miss Bennet, I have struggled in vain but I can bear it no longer....The past months have been a torment...

He pauses, unable to speak. Elizabeth stares at him in astonishment. He struggles on.

DARCY
I came to Rosings with the single object of seeing you...I had to see you...

ELIZABETH
Me?

DARCY
I've fought against my better judgement, my family's expectation...
(pause)
The inferiority of your birth...my rank and circumstance...
(stumblingly)
all those things...but I'm willing to put them aside...and ask you to end my agony...

ELIZABETH
I don't understand...

DARCY
(with passion)
I love you. Most ardently.

Elizabeth stares at him.

DARCY
Please do me the honour of accepting my hand.

A silence. Elizabeth struggles with the most painful confusion of feeling. Finally she recovers.

ELIZABETH
(voice shaking)
Sir, I appreciate the struggle you have been through, and I am very sorry to have caused you pain. Believe me, it was unconsciously done.

A silence. Gathering her shawl, she gets to her feet.

DARCY
(stares)
Is this your reply?

ELIZABETH
Yes, sir.

DARCY
Are you laughing at me?

ELIZABETH
No!

DARCY
Are you rejecting me?

ELIZABETH
(pause)
I'm sure that the feelings which, as you've told me, have hindered your regard, will help you in overcoming it.

A terrible silence, as this sinks in. Neither of them can move. At last, Darcy speaks. He is very pale.

DARCY
Might I ask why, with so little endeavour at civility, I am thus repulsed?

ELIZABETH
(trembling with emotion)
I might as well enquire why, with so evident a design of insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your better judgement. If I *was* uncivil, that was some excuse -

DARCY
Believe me, I didn't mean -

ELIZABETH
But I have other reasons, you know I have!

DARCY
What reasons?

ELIZABETH
Do you think that anything might tempt me to accept the man who has ruined, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?

Silence. Darcy looks as if he's been struck across the face.

ELIZABETH
Do you deny it, Mr Darcy? That you separated a young couple who loved each other, exposing your friend to the censure of the world for caprice, and my sister to its derision for disappointed hopes, and involving them both in misery of the acutest kind?

DARCY
I do not deny it.

ELIZABETH
(blurts out)
How could you do it?

DARCY
Because I believed your sister indifferent to him.

ELIZABETH
Indifferent?

DARCY
I watched them most carefully, and realized his attachment was much deeper than hers.

ELIZABETH
That's because she's shy!

DARCY
Bingley too is modest, and was persuaded that she didn't feel strongly for him.

ELIZABETH
Because *you* suggested it!

DARCY
I did it for his own good.

ELIZABETH
My sister hardly shows her true feelings to *me*!
(pause, takes a breath)
I suppose you suspect that his fortune had some bearing on the matter?

DARCY
(sharply)
No! I wouldn't do your sister the dishonour. Though it was suggested -
(stops)

ELIZABETH
What was?

DARCY
It was made perfectly clear that...an advantageous marriage...
(stops)

ELIZABETH
Did my sister give that impression?

DARCY
No!

An awkward pause.

DARCY
There was, however, I have to admit... the matter of your family -

ELIZABETH
Our want of connection? Mr Bingley didn't vex himself about that!

DARCY
No, it was more than that.

ELIZABETH
How, sir?

DARCY
(pause, very uncomfortable)
It pains me to say this, but it was the lack of propriety shown by your mother, your three younger sisters - even, on occasion, your father. Forgive me.

Lizzie blushes. He has hit home. Darcy paces up and down.

DARCY
You and your sister - I must exclude from this...

Darcy stops and gazes at her. He is in turmoil. Elizabeth glares at him, in a blaze of fury and misery.

ELIZABETH
And what about Mr Wickham?

DARCY
Mr Wickham?

ELIZABETH
What excuse can you give for your behavior to him?

DARCY
You take an eager interest in that gentleman's concerns!

ELIZABETH
He told me of his misfortunes.

DARCY
Oh yes, his misfortunes have been very great indeed!

ELIZABETH
You have ruined his chances, and yet treat him with sarcasm?

DARCY
So this is your opinion of me! Thank you for explaining so fully. Perhaps these offences might have been overlooked, if your pride had not been hurt -

ELIZABETH
My pride?

DARCY
- by my honesty in admitting scruples about our relationship.
(MORE)

DARCY (cont'd)
Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your circumstances?

ELIZABETH
And those are the words of a gentleman? From the first moment I met you, your arrogance and conceit, your selfish distain of the feelings of others, made me realize that you were the last man in the world I could ever be prevailed upon to marry.

Darcy recoils, as if slapped. A terrible silence.

DARCY
Forgive me, madam, for taking up so much of your time.

He leaves, abruptly.

Elizabeth watches him stride away, through the rain. What has she done? She bitterly bursts into tears.

73 INT. HUNSFORD - DAY. 73

Elizabeth comes in soaked to the skin. Charlotte runs to her.

CHARLOTTE
Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH
I was caught somewhat off-guard.

74 INT. BEDROOM - HUNSFORD - THE SAME. 74

Charlotte attends to Elizabeth who has changed and is drying her hair, a shawl around her shoulders.

CHARLOTTE
Shall I call the doctor?

ELIZABETH
No! Charlotte, I shall be quite all right. Please, give Lady de Bourgh my apologies. You must not keep her waiting.

Mr Collins clatters up the stairs.

COLLINS
(popping his head around the door)
Come on. We shall be late!

Charlotte leaves, reluctantly, and goes downstairs.

CUT TO

Later: The sound of the front door closing. Elizabeth sits down, heavily, on the bed. She walks downstairs and enters the drawing room.

75 INT. DRAWING ROOM - HUNSFORD - DAY. 75

Elizabeth is in the drawing room, she looks at a book on the table. It is Fordyce's Sermons. She puts it down and walks to the mirror and stares at herself. After a moment suddenly Darcy's face appears. She freezes. They stare at each other without speaking. Finally...

DARCY
I came to leave you this.

He places a letter on the table behind her. Elizabeth does not turn but watches him through the mirror.

DARCY (CONT'D)
I'm not going to renew the sentiments which were so disgusting to you, but to address the two offenses you have laid against me. I had not long been in Hertfordshire before I saw that Bingley preferred your eldest sister. I observed my friend's behaviour attentively and I could perceive that his partiality for Miss Bennet was beyond what I have ever witnessed in him.

Elizabeth cannot bring herself to look at Darcy. She stares at her own reflection as he speaks.

DARCY (CONT'D)
Yet when I observed your sister I detected no symptom of peculiar regard, and witnessed only the families coarse appetite for having their daughters married favorably. And so in London, perhaps erroneously, I persuaded him of the unfitness of the match citing your sisters coolness towards him.

We zoom in on Elizabeth's reflection.

DARCY (CONT'D)
It was unknowingly done and though the motives which governed me may to you appear naturally insufficient, they were done to protect a friend. As to the other more serious matter..

As Elizabeth turns she realises Darcy has gone. Darcy's voice carries.

DARCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"My father provided for Mr Wickham a valuable living."

Elizabeth tears open the envelope, her hands shaking, and reads the letter, as Darcy's voice carries on.

DARCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"But upon his death, however, Mr Wickham told me that he had no intention of taking orders and would I recompense him to the tune of £3000 so he could go to town and study the law.

We circle Elizabeth as she reads.

DARCY (CONT'D) (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This I did, though by now I had some doubts about his character. These were confirmed by reports that he had sunk into a life of idleness, gambling and dissipation. The money was soon used up, whereupon he wrote demanding more money which I refused, whereupon he severed all acquaintance"

Holding the letter she looks out of the window to see Darcy riding away.

DARCY (CONT'D)
"But last summer he was unwillingly obtruded on my notice when he connived a relationship with my sister whom he persuaded to be in love with him and made her consent to an elopement. She was but fifteen.

76 EXT. HUNSFORD - DAY. 76

Darcy rides off.

DARCY (V.O.)
Mr Wickham's prime objective was her inheritance of thirty thousand pounds but hope of revenging me was a strong inducement. I was lucky enough to persuade my sister of her folly. I hope this goes someway to mitigating my behaviour in your eyes. If you doubt my word please have it confirmed by my cousin Fitzwilliam.

77 INT. DRAWING ROOM - HUNSFORD - LATER - DAY . 7

Elizabeth with the letter. Charlotte walks in. Elizabeth is shaking.

CHARLOTTE
Lizzy! Are you alright?

ELIZABETH
I do not know. I hardly know myself.

Elizabeth looks at Charlotte utterly shaken.

78 INT/EXT. CARRIAGE/CHEAPSIDE - DAY. 78

Elizabeth riding in a carriage through Cheapside, reading the letter.

DARCY (V.O.)
P.S. As we shall never meet again, I wish you all happiness in the future.

Elizabeth looks out at the high warehouse building and the bustle of trade. There is no horizon.

79 INT. GARDINERS HOUSE - CHEAPSIDE - DAY. 7

Mrs Gardiner, the girls' kindly aunt, is taking Elizabeth's coat from her.

MRS GARDINER
How fortunate, you are here just in time to catch everybody coming through from Longbourn.

ELIZABETH
How is Jane?

Mrs Gardiner smiles sadly.

MRS GARDINER
She is outside.

Through a window Elizabeth sees Jane sitting quietly alone at her needle work.

CUT TO:

80 EXT. SMALL BACK GARDEN OF THE GARDINERS' HOUSE - CHEAPSIDE - THE SAME. 8

Elizabeth and Jane sit together in the small walled garden.

Jane is all smiles, but behind her eyes is a sadness unseen before. Elizabeth is desperate to unburden herself but feels unable.

JANE
I am quite over him, Lizzie. If he passed in the street I would hardly notice. London is so diverting...

ELIZABETH
Oh Jane...

JANE
It's true! What with the theatre and... But tell me, what news from Kent?

ELIZABETH
Nothing. Everything as you might imagine.

Elizabeth tries to smile. There is a crash as all the Bennet's arrive at the house. Kitty rushes into the garden crying her eyes out, she is followed by Lydia and Mrs Bennet.

KITTY
Lizzie, tell mama, tell her!

LYDIA
(smugly)
Mrs Forster has invited me.

KITTY
(wails)
Why didn't she ask me as well?

ELIZABETH
Kitty, what's happened?

LYDIA
- because she likes me better.

KITTY
I've just as much right as Lydia -

MRS BENNET
Oh, if *I* could but go to Brighton -

KITTY
- and more so, because I'm two years older!

Elizabeth looks to Jane.

JANE
Lydia has been invited to Brighton with the Foresters.

MRS BENNET
A little sea-bathing would set me up very nicely.

LYDIA
I shall dine with the officers every night!

An anguished wail from Kitty.

MRS BENNET
I'm sure I cried for two days when Colonel Millar's regiment went away. I thought I should have broke my heart.

LIZZIE
Mother! Are you all mad?

She glares at them, deeply upset - by them, by everything.

81 INT. THE GARDINERS' HOUSE - DAY. 81

Elizabeth has found a quiet corner with her father.

ELIZABETH
Please Papa, don't let her go!

MR BENNET
Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public place or other, and we can never expect her to do it with so little inconvenience as under the present circumstances.

ELIZABETH
(with great emotion)
If *you*, dear father, will not take the trouble to check her, she will be fixed forever as the silliest and most determined flirt who ever made her family ridiculous. And Kitty will follow, as she always does.

MR BENNET
We shall have no peace until she goes.

ELIZABETH
(really angry now)
Peace! Is that all you care about?

MR BENNET
Colonel Forster is a sensible man and will keep her out of any real mischief, and she is far too poor to be an object of prey to anyone.

ELIZABETH
Father, it's dangerous! -

MR BENNET
I'm sure the officers will find women better worth their while. Let us hope, in fact, that her stay in Brighton will teach her her own insignificance. At any rate she can hardly grow any worse, without authorizing us to lock her up for the rest of her life.

Elizabeth gazes at her father - will nothing touch him? He gave up on his daughter long ago. For this, just now, she hates him.

ELIZABETH
No wonder our family is treated with contempt.

She leaves, tears stinging her eyes. Her father looks puzzled at her outburst.

82 INT. DRAWING ROOM - CHEAPSIDE - THE SAME. 82

Mr Bennet follows Elizabeth in.

MR BENNET
Well, at least the house will be quieter.

ELIZABETH
I don't wish to be stuck with such a foolish family any longer, with your constant talk of men and marriages. Surely there is more to life.

MRS GARDINER
Lizzie dear, you would be very welcome to accompany us?

MR GARDINER
Oh yes. We plan to journey through the Peak District. You'd be most welcome.

MARY
Oh, the glories of nature! What are men, compared to rocks and mountains?

ELIZABETH
Believe me, men are either eaten up with arrogance or stupidity. And if they're amiable they're so easily led that they have no minds of their own whatsoever.

MRS GARDINER
Take care, my love, that savours strongly of bitterness.

ELIZABETH
No, they bring nothing but heartache.

83 INT. BEDROOM - CHEAPSIDE - NIGHT. 83

As usual Elizabeth and Jane share a bed. They lie next to each other in the darkness

ELIZABETH
I saw Mr Darcy when I was in Rosings.

JANE
Why did you not tell me. Did he mention Mr Bingley.

Pause.

ELIZABETH
No. He did not.

Elizabeth has never felt more alone in the company of her sister.

84 EXT. DERBYSHIRE - DAY. 84

A ravishing landscape of savage and romantic beauty - scudding clouds, mountains, wild rocky outcrops. Elizabeth is walking freely, the wind in her hair. As she nears the peak of a promontory, Mr and Mrs Gardiner are below making their way towards her. They smile at her. She strides off determined to reach the very top. When she gets there she stands with her arms outstretched, her head back laughing into the wind. The view is magnificent. She breathes deeply.

85 EXT. LAMBTON - DUSK. 85

An establishing shot of Lambton, a charming market town. Through the window of an inn we see Elizabeth and Mr and Mrs Gardiner at a table.

86 INT. INN - LAMBTON - NIGHT. 86

In the inn, the Gardiner's and Elizabeth are eating supper. An air of high spirits. At the next table, another amiable tourist couple are also tucking into their food.

WOMAN
(indicating her husband)
He's been taking the waters at Buxton.
(laughs)
Hasn't done him a jot of good.

HER HUSBAND
But we've had a fine time, haven't we dear?

WOMAN
We've visited Chatsworth, Dovedale, Pemberley -

MRS GARDINER
Pemberley?

WOMAN
Just two miles from here.

Close, very close, on Lizzie's face.

HER HUSBAND
One of the best houses in the country.

MR GARDINER
(to Elizabeth)
Aren't you acquainted with the owner, Mr Darcy?

MRS GARDINER
Well, we shall go there tomorrow, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH
I would rather stay here.

MRS GARDINER
Stay here?

ELIZABETH
(very uncomfortable)
I must own that I'm tired of great houses. All those carpets and curtains...

MRS GARDINER
But you liked Chatsworth.

ELIZABETH
If it is anything like Mr Darcy, I am sure I will not be able to bear it.

MRS GARDINER
Come, come, Lizzie.

WOMAN
The grounds alone are worth a visit.

MR GARDINER
Let us not make a fuss. If the girl does not want to go there is little point in persuading her.

87 INT. BEDROOM - INN - NIGHT. 87

Elizabeth is preparing for bed. The chambermaid fills her washbowl and starts to leave.

ELIZABETH
I hear that Pemberley is not far from here.

MAID
Yes, madam.

ELIZABETH
You see something of the owner, do you, in town?

MAID
Not for some months, madam, for he's still in London, I believe.

A pause. Close on Elizabeth's face.

88 EXT. PEMBERLEY - DAY. 88

The carriage enters the gates of Pemberley.

MRS GARDINER
I'm so glad you changed your mind.

Elizabeth is alert, her eyes bright with curiosity. The parkland is wild and rocky. Deer graze; rooks wheel in the sky. A sense of freedom and liberation. As the carriage drives over the top of a hill, close on Elizabeth's face. She gasps. The Gardiners gasp.

A huge, wide shot of Pemberley House. It's vast, breathtakingly beautiful, set in great boulder-strewn park lands. A mansion built of golden stone, glowing in the sunlight.

89 EXT. PARK - PEMBERLY - THE SAME. 89

Elizabeth walks through the magnificent grounds.

MRS GARDINER
Imagine being mistress of all this. It is as big as all Cheapside.

Elizabeth is lost in admiration.

90 INT. PEMBERLY - DAY. 90

Elizabeth and the Gardiners are being taken on the tour by the housekeeper, Mrs Reynolds, who witters on in the background with descriptions of each room. Elizabeth is apart and we witness the exquisite house from her point of view. A book lies open on a reading desk, Elizabeth turns it over to read the title.

MRS GARDINER
(to Elizabeth)
Keep up.

They walk through room after amazing room: a breath-taking library, an unbelievable staircase.

91 INT. PICTURE GALLERY - PEMBERLY - DAY. 91

The huge picture gallery. Elizabeth is apart from the rest looking at the pictures she stops by a painting of Darcy. She looks at it thoughtfully but is interrupted by Mrs Reynolds and the Gardiners who are following her.

MRS REYNOLDS
This is my master - Mr Darcy.

MRS GARDINER
A handsome face. Lizzie, is it a true likeness of him?

MRS REYNOLDS
Does this young lady know Mr Darcy?

ELIZABETH
Only a little.

MRS REYNOLDS
And do you not think him a handsome man, Miss?

ELIZABETH
(thoughtfully)
Yes, yes I suppose he is.

Mrs Reynolds moves the Gardiners on to another painting, but Elizabeth stays, staring at Darcy's image.

MRS REYNOLDS
And this is his sister, Miss Georgiana. She plays and sings all day long.

We realize that in the distance we have heard music. Elizabeth is still gazing at the portrait of Darcy, then suddenly snaps out of her reverie, as she processes Mrs Reynolds speech:

ELIZABETH
They are at home?!

MRS REYNOLDS
Miss Darcy is always down for the summer. Mr Darcy is due here tomorrow.

MR GARDINER
Is your master much at Pemberley?

MRS REYNOLDS
Not as much as I would wish, sir, or he - for he dearly loves it here.

Relaxed again Elizabeth wanders off as the Gardiners talk to Mrs Reynolds.

MRS GARDINER
If he should marry, you might see more of him.

MRS REYNOLDS
Yes madam, but I do not know when *that* will be. I do not know a lady who is good enough for him.

MRS GARDINER
What do you mean?

MRS REYNOLDS
I've known Mr Darcy since he was a boy. He was always a kind and generous person even then. Not everyone can see it, because he does not make a meal of it like a lot of young men nowadays. But he is the most sweet-tempered and kind-hearted man I have ever known.

CUT TO:

As the Gardiners look at more paintings, Elizabeth drifts out through the open doors and onto a terrace. In the bright sunlight the view of the gardens and valley beyond is exquisite. Outside the music we heard before is louder.

92 EXT. TERRACE - PEMBERLY - THE SAME. 92

Elizabeth wanders aimlessly across the terrace, being unconsciously drawn by the music. Suddenly Elizabeth recognizes the tune (perhaps it is one she has played earlier - but this time it is played exquisitely). She follows the music round a corner, intrigued as she gets closer and closer to its source. She finally realizes she is outside the room where the music is being played.

She steals herself a moment, but her curiosity gets the better of her and she discretely peeps in.

Through the window she sees Georgina Darcy, a beautiful fifteen year old playing the piano with great passion and fluency. She is moved by the music and listens. After sometime, then someone steps into her view but is mostly hidden by shadows in the room. He is directly behind Georgina and gently puts his hands over her eyes. Georgina stops playing and laughs uproariously. She stands and kisses the figure, the sunlight hits his face. It is Darcy.

Georgina and Darcy kiss. Elizabeth is stunned to see him there. Darcy glances up and sees Elizabeth watching him. For a moment they both stare at each other frozen with surprise. Georgina starts in fright at the figure, Elizabeth turns and runs. Darcy comes out after her.

DARCY
Miss Bennet!

Elizabeth stops, appallingly embarrassed. Darcy catches up with her. They both blush, deeply.

ELIZABETH
I thought you were in London.

DARCY
(stupidly)
No...I'm not.

ELIZABETH
No.

Another ghastly silence. Then they both speak at once.

DARCY
I came here a day early -

ELIZABETH
We wouldn't have come -

DARCY
- some business with my steward -

ELIZABETH
I'm so terribly sorry -

They stop. He gazes at her with great emotion.

ELIZABETH
I'm visiting Derbyshire with my uncle and aunt.

DARCY
(trying to recover)
And are you having a pleasant trip?

ELIZABETH
Very pleasant. Tomorrow we go to Matlock.

DARCY
Tomorrow?
(disappointed)
Are you staying at Lambton?

ELIZABETH
Yes. At the Rose and Crown.

Another pause. She extends her hand.

ELIZABETH
I'm so sorry to intrude. They said the house was open for visitors. I had no idea...

She shakes his hand and starts to walk away.

DARCY
May I see you to the village?

ELIZABETH
Oh no! I'm very fond of walking.

DARCY
Yes.

ELIZABETH
Goodbye, Mr Darcy.

She hurries away. He gazes after her.

CUT TO:

A wood. Now she is out of sight Lizzie collapses on a log. She is utterly undone. Around her, the birds sing.

93 INT. INN - NIGHT. 93

It's that night. Lizzie comes downstairs, for supper. And stops. Through a gap in the door to the restaurant she sees Mr Darcy talking to her aunt and uncle.

DARCY
- I shall send my carriage at noon

After a moment Darcy leaves and Elizabeth approaches the table.

MRS GARDINER
Lizzie, I've just met Mr Darcy! Why didn't you tell us you had seen him? He's asked us to dine with him tomorrow - He was very civil, was he not?

MR GARDINER
Very civil.

MRS GARDINER
Not at all like you painted him.

ELIZABETH
(stares)
To dine with him?

MRS GARDINER
- there is something pleasing about his mouth, when he speaks.

MR GARDINER
You don't mind delaying our journey for another day?

Elizabeth shakes her head, dumbly.

MRS GARDINER
He particularly wishes you to meet his sister.

ELIZABETH
His sister?

94 INT. LIBRARY AND DRAWING ROOM - PEMBERLEY - DAY. 94

A footman escorts Elizabeth and the Gardiner's through the stupendous library. From the drawing room, the sound of a piano playing. It's the same music Elizabeth played at Rosings, but this time played very beautifully. Elizabeth is filled with trepidation; we can almost feel her heart racing.

The footman opens the double doors to reveal the magnificent drawing room. Darcy is there. So is the dreaded Miss Bingley. Seeing her, Elizabeth's polite smile falters. Darcy's sister Georgiana plays the piano. She jumps up and hurries over.

DARCY
My sister, Miss Darcy...

They smile and bob. Georgiana is a friendly, sweet girl.

GEORGIANA
Miss Elizabeth, my brother has told me so much about you. I feel as if we are friends already.

ELIZABETH
What a beautiful instrument.

GEORGIANA
My brother gave it to me.
(smiles at him)
He shouldn't have.

DARCY
Yes I should.

GEORGIANA
Oh very well then.

DARCY
She's easily persuaded, is she not?

They gaze at each other with affection. Miss Bingley approaches.

MISS BINGLEY
(small smile)
What a surprise, Miss Bennet, to see you in Derbyshire.

ELIZABETH
(small nod)
Your brother is well, I trust?

MISS BINGLEY
Very well. He hopes to come here soon.
(significant glance at Georgiana)
Pemberley has a special attraction for him.

ELIZABETH
(sweetly)
Yes, the library is particularly splendid, is it not?

A small silence. Darcy, uneasy at their conversation, approaches.

MISS BINGLEY
And how is your family, Miss Bennet? Someone told me the militia are removed from Meryton.
(significant smile)
They must be a great loss for *some* of you -

Darcy comes to the rescue.

DARCY
Your uncle is fond of fishing, I hear.

ELIZABETH
Yes, very.

DARCY
(drawing her away)
Can you persuade him to borrow a rod this afternoon?

(MORE)

DARCY (cont'd)
For the lake here is very well stocked and its occupants left in peace for far too long.

Elizabeth smiles, surprised and delighted. And grateful to be rescued. What does Mr Darcy mean by this?

She moves away, to speak to her uncle. Miss Bingley moves closer to Darcy.

MISS BINGLEY
In six months I have never seen anyone so altered. How brown and coarse she has become!

DARCY
I perceive no alteration except she is rather tanned. Hardly a miraculous consequence of travelling in the summer.

MISS BINGLEY
I remember, when we first knew her in Hertfordshire, you said "*she* a beauty? I would have as soon called her mother a wit!"

DARCY
You must have mis-heard, Caroline. Even had I thought it, I would have couched it with a little more finesse.

Elizabeth looks across at Darcy - they smile at each other.

95 EXT. DERBYSHIRE - DUSK 95

Darcy is driving Elizabeth and the Gardiner's back to Lampton. The rugged landscape looks even more beautiful and dramatic in the dusk light. Elizabeth sits up with Darcy who holds the reins, while Mr and Mrs Gardiner sit comfortably in the carriage. Mr Gardiner smiles broadly at two large fish that lie beside him.

ELIZABETH
It is so beautiful up here. I will be sorry to leave.

Darcy smiles at her.

ELIZABETH
You have been a most gracious host. I'm sure my aunt and uncle will talk of nothing else for days.

DARCY
I have recently thought a great deal about how I appear and act to others.

She smiles softly at Darcy.

ELIZABETH
It does you credit, sir.

96 INT. INN - LAMBTON - NIGHT. 96

The party arrive back at the inn.

MR GARDINER
(quietly to Elizabeth)
What a capital fellow.

MRS GARDINER
Thank you so much Mr Darcy.

Darcy is about to take his leave when a servant brings Elizabeth a letter.

SERVANT
(to Lizzie)
For you, madam.

ELIZABETH
(delighted)
107 It's from Jane. 10

She rips open the letter.

97 INT. PARLOUR - INN - LAMBTON - THE SAME. 97

Elizabeth is crying with the open letter in her hand. Darcy and Mr and Mrs Gardiner stand dumb, not quite knowing what to do. Elizabeth tries to speak but bursts into tears again. She cries for a long time.

DARCY
Miss Elizabeth.

She cries on.

DARCY (CONT'D)
Miss Elizabeth.

She eventually gathers herself.

ELIZABETH
It is the most dreadful news. Lydia has run away - with Mr Wickham. They are gone together from Brighton to Lord knows where. She has no money, no connections, I fear she is lost forever.

DARCY
(quietly to Elizabeth)
This is my fault - if only I had exposed Wickham when I should.

ELIZABETH
No, this is my fault. I might have prevented all of it by merely being open with my sisters rather than too proud with my knowledge.

Mr and Mrs Gardiner look at each other perplexed.

MRS GARDINER
Has anything been done to recover her?

ELIZABETH
Father has gone to London. But I know very well that nothing can be done. We have not the smallest hope.

DARCY
Would to heaven that anything could be said or done on my part that could offer consolation to such distress.

ELIZABETH
Sir, it think it is too late.

MR GARDINER
I am afraid we must go at once - I will join Mr Bennet and find Lydia before she ruins the family forever.

DARCY
I am so very sorry. This is grave indeed. I will leave you. Goodbye.

Darcy pauses at the door, looks back at Elizabeth and then is gone.

98 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT. 98

The Gardiner's carriage racing through the night.

99 INT. LONGBOURN - MRS BENNET'S BEDROOM - DAY. 99

Elizabeth, Jane, Mary and Kitty are gathered around Mrs Bennet who has taken to her bed.

MRS BENNET
Why did the Foresters let her out of their sight? I always said they were unfit to have charge of her.

MARY
(smugly)
And now she is ruined.

MRS BENNET
You are all ruined. Who will take you now with a fallen sister? Poor Mr Bennet will now have to fight the perfidious Wickham and then be killed...

ELIZABETH
He hasn't found him yet, Mama.

MRS BENNET
- and The Collins' will turn us out before he is cold in his grave -

JANE
Do not be alarmed, mama. Our uncle is helping in the search.

MRS BENNET
Lydia must know what this will do to my nerves, such flutterings and spasms all over me...

100 EXT. LONDON - DAY. 10

We're looking directly down onto a London street. Mr Bennet stands still against the passing pedestrian traffic. He tries to address a passer by.

MR BENNET
Excuse me.

They ignore him. He tries again

MR BENNET (CONT'D)
Excuse me, I'm looking for...

Mr Bennet takes out a piece of paper.

101 INT. MESS HALL - BARRACKS - NIGHT. 101

Mr Bennet walks timidly into the mess hall. It is smoky, drunken, noisy, boisterous and extremely threatening. Mr Bennet stops at the threshold, gulps, then the whole room turns round to look at him and a sudden silence descends. Mr Bennet is terrified.

MR BENNET
I am...(his voice breaks up - he clears his throat) I am looking for a Mr Wickham.

102 INT. UPSTAIRS AT LONGBOURNE - DAY. 102

Elizabeth and Jane are outside Mrs Bennet's room. From inside we hear a moan.

MRS BENNET (OFF)
We are ruined. Ruined.

ELIZABETH
How long is this going to go on for?

JANE
Don't be too harsh. This is hard for all of us.

They walk downstairs.

103 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 103

Elizabeth and Jane walk into the drawing room. Kitty and Mary are busying themselves.

ELIZABETH
I can't bear not hearing anything.

KITTY
Look. It's Papa!

104 INT. LIBRARY - LONGBOURN - DAY. CONTINUOUS. 104

The girls rush into the library. Mr Bennet slumps at his desk.

KITTY
- who is to fight Wickham and make him marry Lydia, now you've come home?

MR BENNET
For God's sake let me be!
(to Lizzie)
Lizzie, help me with my boots.

Elizabeth pulls off his boots for him.

JANE
You suppose them to be still in London?

MR BENNET
(nods)
Where else could they be so well concealed?

ELIZABETH
Oh father, I'm so sorry.

MR BENNET
It's been my own doing.

ELIZABETH
You mustn't be too severe on yourself.

MR BENNET
No Lizzie. Let me once in my life feel how much I have been to blame.
(wan smile)
I am not afraid of being overpowered by the experience. It will pass away soon enough.

105 EXT/INT. BOARDING HOUSE - LONDON - DAY. 105

We're looking through a window to the stairwell of a seedy looking boarding house. An anonymas pair of mens boots appear climbing up the stairs. We move across the exterior wall of the building to find an open window through which Lydia and Wickham can be seen.

Lydia and Wickham sit, snuggled close beside the fire in their room in a humble lodging house. They're eating a meal with relish. Giggling, Lydia feeds him a mouthful.

A knock at the door. They freeze, like naughty children.

106 EXT. GARDEN - LONGBOURN - DAY. 106

The girls have a letter. Kitty grabs it from Jane, Mary grabs it from Kitty, before she has a chance to open it Jane grabs it from Mary.

JANE
It's to Daddy. It's in Uncle's writing.

Mr Bennet snatches the letter.

MR BENNET
As it is addressed to me...

He tears it open and begins to read, squinting because he has forgotten his glasses.

MR BENNET (CONT'D)
He's found them.

KITTY
Are they married?

MR BENNET
(squinting at the letter)
Just wait. I can't make out his script.

Elizabeth snatches it.

ELIZABETH
Give it to me. (she reads)

KITTY
Are they married?

ELIZABETH
They will be, if father will settle a hundred pounds a year on her. That is Wickham's condition.

KITTY
A hundred pounds!

ELIZABETH
You will agree to this, father?

The letter is passed around the other girls.

MR BENNET
Of course I will agree. But how much your uncle has laid on this wretched man already is anybody's guess.

KITTY
What do you mean, Father?

MR BENNET
No man in his senses would marry Lydia on so slight a temptation as a hundred a year.

ELIZABETH
Ah, I see.

JANE
See what?

MR BENNET
Your uncle is very generous.

ELIZABETH
Do you think it a large sum?

MR BENNET
Wickham's a fool if he takes her for less than ten thousand pounds. I should be sorry to think so ill of him in the very beginning of our relationship.

JANE
Ten thousand! Heaven forbid!

107 INT. MR & MRS BENNET'S BEDROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY. 1(

Close on Mrs Bennet's face as she springs out of bed. Pure triumphant joy.

MRS BENNET
Lydia married! And at sixteen too! Ring the bell, Kitty! I must put on my things and tell Lady Lucas! Oh to see her face! And tell the servants they will have a bowl of punch!

The other Bennet's are assembled.

ELIZABETH
We should thank our uncle, Mama.

MRS BENNET
And so he should help! He's much richer than us, and he hasn't got any children.

ELIZABETH
(angrily)
How can you talk like that?

Her mother gets to her feet.

MRS BENNET
A daughter, married!

ELIZABETH
Is that all you think about?

MRS BENNET
"Mrs Wickham" - how well it sounds -

ELIZABETH
(in desperation)
You don't know what he's like -

MRS BENNET
Now where will they live? Purvis Lodge might do. Ashworth is vacant of course, but it's too far off, I couldn't bear to have her ten miles from me -

MR BENNET
Before you take any of these houses, Mrs Bennet, let us be clear. Into *one* house she will never be welcome.

Mrs Bennet stares at him.

108 INT. HALLWAY - LONGBOURN - DAY. 108

Lydia's triumphant face. The cat that's got the cream. She comes into the house with Wickham. Her mother kisses her, effusively. Mr Bennet coldly bows.

LYDIA
- and then we passed Sarah Sims in her carriage so I took off my glove and let my hand just rest on the window frame, so she might see the ring, and then I bowed and smiled like anything!

Kitty shrieks with envy. Lizzie moves away; she cannot bear it. Wickham catches her eye, but she ignores him.

109 INT. DINING ROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY. 109

They are taking their seats for dinner. Lydia moves to the head of the table.

LYDIA
Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower, for I am the married woman.

She sits down and giggles at her sisters. The maid brings in the food. Lydia holds up her hand, to display her ring to the maid.

LYDIA
You must all go to Brighton, for that is the place to get husbands! I hope you have half my good luck.

ELIZABETH
(furious)
Lydia!

CUT TO:

Wickham looking uncomfortable. He's talking to the stony-faced Mr Bennet.

WICKHAM
I've been enlisted in a regiment in the north of England, sir.

MR BENNET
(nods coldly)
I'm glad to hear of it.

WICKHAM
Near Newcastle. We shall travel there next week.

KITTY
Can I come and stay with you?

MR BENNET
That is out of the question.

CUT TO:

Lydia, rattling on to Lizzie.

LYDIA
Well, Monday morning came and I was in such a fuss -

ELIZABETH
I don't want to hear -

LYDIA
- there was my aunt, preaching and talking away just as if she was reading a sermon, she was horrid unpleasant -

ELIZABETH
Can't you understand why?

LYDIA
- but I didn't hear a word because I was thinking of my dear Wickham. I longed to know whether he would be married in his blue coat...

CUT TO:

Mary turning to Wickham.

MARY
The north of England, I believe, boasts some spectacular scenery...

CUT TO:

Lydia burbling on, to a stony-faced Lizzie.

LYDIA
- and then my uncle was called away from the church on business and I thought - who is to be our best man if he doesn't come back? Lucky he *did* come back or I would have had to ask Mr Darcy -

ELIZABETH
(stares)
Mr Darcy?

LYDIA
(claps her hand to her mouth)
I forgot! I shouldn't have said a word!

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy was at your wedding?

LYDIA
(whispers)
He was the one that discovered us! He knew where to find Wickham, you see.
(hisses)
But don't tell anyone! He told me not to tell!

Lizzie stares at her. *Darcy* at her *wedding*? Lydia turns away, to talk to the others.

110 EXT. GARDEN - LONGBOURN - DAY. 110

Lydia, croquet mallet in hand, drags her new husband across the lawn. Kitty follows.

LYDIA
Come on, Wickham! You've got to play.

KITTY
Yes, come on!

Wickham looks slightly abashed - a trapped man. What has he let himself in for?

Lizzie comes into the garden, looking for her younger sister. Wickham detaches himself and comes over to her. A rueful smile.

WICKHAM
I hope we can be even better friends, now we're brother and sister.

An attempt at a twinkling smile, but Elizabeth is now immune to his charm. She nods, briefly.

WICKHAM
I hear you visited Pemberley. My dear old home.

ELIZABETH
(nods)
I met Mr Darcy's sister.

WICKHAM
(a beat)
Did you like her?

ELIZABETH
Very much.
(looks at him)
We found a great deal to talk about.

A beat. Wickham looks deeply uneasy. He bows and leaves. Lizzie watches him pick up a mallet and take his turn. She can't bear it; she hurries up to Lydia and draws her aside.

ELIZABETH
(low voice)
Why was Mr Darcy there?

LYDIA
I'm not supposed to tell.

Lizzie abandons her pride. She takes Lydia's hand.

ELIZABETH
Please, Lydia!

LYDIA
Because he paid for it.

ELIZABETH
(stares)
For what?

LYDIA
(carelessly)
The wedding, Wickham's commission. Everything.

ELIZABETH
Everything?

KITTY
(calls)
Lydia! It's your turn!

Lydia moves to go.

LYDIA
People kept saying Wickham owed them money, it was so tedious. So Darcy settled his debts but I don't really like him, do you?

Lizzie pulls her back.

ELIZABETH
But why did he do it?

LYDIA
(shrugs)
I don't know, do I? Anyway you're not to tell because it's supposed to be our uncle who paid, and he wouldn't have minded paying, either, because I'm his favorite.

She leaves. Giggles and shrieks from the croquet lawn. Elizabeth looks blank with shock.

111 EXT. BINGLEY'S HOUSE - MAYFAIR - DAY. 111

Close on Darcy's grimly determined face. Drawing back, we see that he is walking down a street in Mayfair. He arrives at a house, pauses, and rings the bell. The door is opened.

BUTLER
Mr Darcy.

DARCY
I have some business with Mr Bingley.

Darcy goes inside and the door shuts. The camera cranes slowly upstairs until we can see through the first floor window and into the drawing room. Mr Darcy enters and bows to Mr Bingley. He starts to talk in earnest. Bingley looks stunned by what Darcy is relaying to him. We witness the dumbshow of Darcy confessing that he has wronged Jane Bennet.

112 EXT. LONGBOURN - DAY. 112

Lydia and Wickham are leaving. Mr Bennet stands at a distance. Mrs Bennet sobs as Lydia climbs onto the carriage.

MRS BENNET
Write to me often, my dear!

Wickham takes his leave of Elizabeth.

WICKHAM
Please relay my affections to the Darcy's on your next acquaintance. I am sure he will be pleased to hear things have worked out so well.

He joins Lydia.

LYDIA
(through the window)
Married women never have much time for writing. My sisters may write to *me!* They'll have nothing else to do.

The Mrs Bennet and the girls watch as the carriage drives away.

MRS BENNET
Oh there is nothing so bad as parting with ones children! One seems so forlorn without them.

ELIZABETH
That is the consequence of marrying a daughter. It must make you better satisfied that your other four are single.

113 EXT. MERYTON VILLAGE - DAY. 113

Elizabeth and Jane are out shopping with their mother and sisters. Their housekeeper, Mrs Hill, comes out of the butchers shop.

MRS HILL
Did you hear the news, madam? Mr Bingley is returning to Netherfield.

A stunned silence. Lizzie glances at Jane. She blushes.

MRS BENNET
Mr Bingley?

Mrs Hill indicates a woman in the butcher's shop.

MRS HILL
Mrs Nichols is ordering a haunch of pork, for she expects him tomorrow.

MRS BENNET
Tomorrow?
(recovering)
Not that I care about it. Mr Bingley is nothing to us and I'm sure *I* never want to see him again.
(moves away)
No, we shall not mention a word about it.
(comes back to Mrs Hill)
Is it quite certain he is coming?

MRS HILL
Yes, madam. I believe he is alone; his sister remains in town.

MRS BENNET
Huh! Come along, girls.

Their mother goes into the draper's shop. Jane pauses at the threshold.

JANE
It's all right, Lizzie. I'm just glad that he comes alone, because then we shall see less of him.
(blushing)
Not that I'm afraid of *myself*, but I dread other people's remarks.

A brave smile. Lizzie, of course, is not convinced in the slightest. They go into the shop.

114 EXT. LONGBOURN - DAY. 114

Mr Bingley rides towards Longbourn, a look of slight trepidation in his eyes. Darcy now comes into view riding along side him. They cross the moat bridge.

115 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY. 115

Mary is practising her scales. Jane and Elizabeth are sitting at their work, with their mother. Kitty rushes in.

KITTY
He is here! He is here, he's at the door!

MRS BENNET
Oh my goodness! Everybody act naturally.

Jane completely freezes. Everybody else goes into a fluster.

MRS BENNET (CONT'D)
Whatever you do, do not appear overbearing.

Kitty looks out through a window.

KITTY
Look. There's someone with him. Mr whats his name. The pompous one from before.

Elizabeth looks through the window at Darcy, her heart leaps to her mouth.

MRS BENNET
Mr Darcy indeed! The very insolence of it. What does he think of coming here?

Elizabeth returns to her seat and sits down, heavily. Mrs Bennet hurries over to Jane and pinches her cheeks.

JANE
Mama!

MRS BENNET
(to Mary - who is still playing)
Stop that and sit down! Find yourself some work! Oh Lord.

They sit there, frozen, pretending to sew. The drawing room door opens and Mrs Hill shows in the two men. They bow. Bingley smiles warmly at Jane, who blushes. Elizabeth glances at Darcy. His face is strained. Mrs Bennet is all smiles for Bingley. She ignores Darcy.

MRS BENNET (CONT'D)
How very glad we are to see you, Mr Bingley! There are a great many changes since you went away. Miss Lucas is married and settled. And one of my own daughters too, you will have seen it in the papers though it was not put in as it ought to have been. Very short, nothing about her family.

BINGLEY
(smiles)
I did hear of it, and offer my congratulations.

MRS BENNET
- but it's very hard to have my Lydia taken away from me. Mr Wickham has been transferred to Newcastle, where ever that is. Thank heaven he has *some* friends.

Mrs Bennet shoots a frosty glance at Mr Darcy. This is more than Elizabeth can bare.

ELIZABETH
Do you hope to stay long in the country, Mr Bingley?

BINGLEY
Just a few weeks. For the shooting.

MRS BENNET
When you have killed all your own birds, Mr Bingley, I beg you will come here and shoot as many as you please.

MR BINGLEY
Thank you - -

MRS BENNET
- Mr Bennet will be vastly happy to oblige you, and will save all the best of the covies for you.

MR BINGLEY
Excellent.

ELIZABETH
Are you well, Mr Darcy?

DARCY
Quite well, thank you.

ELIZABETH
Well, I hope the weather stays fine, for your sport.

DARCY
I return to town tomorrow.

ELIZABETH
(a pause)
So soon?

MRS BENNET
My Jane looks well, does she not?

Mr Bingley stands up abruptly.

BINGLEY
She does indeed. Well, I must be going, I suppose. Darcy -

Darcy cannot quite believe it. He gives Bingley a harsh stare, Bingley has not completed his task.

BINGLEY (CONT'D)
It was very pleasant to see you all again. Elizabeth, Miss Jane..

Bingley can almost not bear to look Jane in the eye as he acknowledges them all very briefly and bolts for the door. Mrs Bennet fusses around him.

MRS BENNET
You must come again. For when you were in town last winter you promised to take a family dinner with us. I have not forgot you see. At least three courses.

Bingley and Darcy take their leave, leaving the Bennets sitting in silence all looking at once another. Kitty is fit to burst out laughing, Elizabeth and Jane horrified by the awkward visit.

116 EXT. THE LANE - NEAR LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 116

Bingley is pacing backwards and forwards in despair muttering to himself. Darcy looks at him in extreme frustration.

BINGLEY
Oh damn, damn, buggery, damn.

DARCY
What were you thinking of?

It's as if Bingley has not heard. He keeps pacing up and down.

BINGLEY
Damn and blast, oh buggery, damn.

117 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - DAY. 117

The girls are now spread around the room. Jane in despair.

JANE
Well, I'm glad that's over. We can now meet as indifferent acquaintances.

ELIZABETH
(laughing)
Oh yes? Jane, take care.

JANE
You cannot think me so weak as to be in danger now.

ELIZABETH
I think you are in great danger of making him as much in love with you as ever.

JANE
I'm sorry, though, that he came with Mr Darcy.

ELIZABETH
(blurts out)
Oh Jane, I have acted so stupidly. Had I been in love, I could not have been more blind!

JANE
(stares)
What do you mean?

The door bell rings.

KITTY
(at the window)
It is him. He's back. He's come again.

A stunned reaction.

CUT TO:

Everyone has regained their decorous positions. They hear Bingley's voice at the door and he comes in very awkwardly. He smiles. His face is crimson with embarrassment.

BINGLEY
I, erm, I know this is all very embarrassing, but I would like to request the privilege of speaking to Miss Jane -

They all look at him.

BINGLEY (CONT'D)
- alone.

MRS BENNET
Girls. Everybody to the kitchen. Immediately. Oh, Mr Bingley. It is so good to see you again so soon.

She ushers everyone out, not before squeezing Jane's hand. Now Jane and Bingley are alone, facing each other with extreme embarrassment.

BINGLEY
Miss Bennet, you have been the victim of a huge misunderstanding. Suffice to say, I have been an unmitigated and comprehensive ass. And therefore, I would like to ask you -

CUT TO:

118 INT. HALLWAY - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 118

Mrs Bennet, Kitty, Mary and Mr Bennet are all jostling for a position at the door in order to overhear events inside.

MARY
Sssssshhh!

Elizabeth is apart from her family. She cannot bear to be there. She walks down the corridor and out of the house into the garden. Through a window she sees Bingley on one knee, her eyes fill with tears as she walks away from the house.

- CUT TO:

119 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 119

Bingley looks at Jane, desperately worried. A pause.

JANE
Yes. A hundred times - yes.

Mrs Bennet and the girls throw open the double doors to the drawing room and come crashing in. Bingley and Jane beam at them.

MRS BENNET
Thank the Lord for that. I thought it would never happen.

120 EXT. GARDEN - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 120

Elizabeth is sat under a tree crying.

121 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - OVER LOOKING LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 121

Darcy looks down at Longbourn.

122 INT. BEDROOM - LONGBOURN - NIGHT. 122

Mr Bennet and Mrs Bennet are in bed.

MR BENNET
I am sure they will do well together, their tempers are much alike. They will be cheated assiduously by their servants, and be so generous with the rest, they will always exceed their income.

MRS BENNET
Exceed their income? He has five thousand a year! I knew she could not be so beautiful for nothing.

The camera moves through to another bedroom - where Mary is reading a book out loud to Kitty - then to yet another room:

123 INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT. 123

Jane and Elizabeth lie in bed.

JANE
He has made me so happy. You know, he was totally ignorant of my being in town last spring!

ELIZABETH
How did he account for it?

JANE
He thought me indifferent!

ELIZABETH
Unfathomable.

JANE
No doubt poisoned by his pernicious sister.

ELIZABETH
Bravo! That is the most unforgiving speech you've ever made.

JANE
Oh Lizzie, if I could but see *you* so happy. If there were such another man for you!

There is a noise outside.

ELIZABETH
Perhaps, if I have very good luck, I may meet with another Mr Collins in time. What is that?

More noise, it sounds like a carriage, then a loud banging on the door downstairs. The girls look at each other.

124 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - LONGBOURN - NIGHT. 124

Mr Bennet, Mrs Bennet and the girls lit by only candles have gathered. The door bangs again.

MARY
Maybe he's changed his mind.

Timidly, Mr Bennet opens the door revealing a wide-eyed Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Everyone gasps.

ELIZABETH
Lady Catherine!

Lady Catherine does not acknowledge her, but comes in uninvited, inspecting the assembled company of aghast Bennets.

LADY CATHERINE
(to Mrs Bennet)
And these are your daughters, I suppose.

MRS BENNET
All but one, the youngest has been lately married your ladyship. And my eldest was only proposed to yesterday afternoon.

LADY CATHERINE
You have a very small garden, madam.

MRS BENNET
I am sure it is nothing compared to Rosings, but it is larger than Sir William Lucas's, I can assure you.

MR BENNET
(tentatively)
Could I offer you a cup of tea, perhaps?

LADY CATHERINE
Absolutely not! I must speak to Miss Elizabeth alone, as a matter of complete urgency.

The Bennets all look at each other, bewildered by this strange turn of events.

125 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - NIGHT. 125

Elizabeth leads the way into the drawing room - lights an oil lamp. Lady Catherine walks in. The door closes behind them.

LADY CATHERINE
You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand why I am here.

Lit only by the oil lamp Lady Catherine resembles a flickering ghoul.

ELIZABETH
Indeed you are mistaken. I can not account for this honour at all.

LADY CATHERINE
Miss Bennet, I warn you, I am not to be trifled with. A report of a most alarming nature has reached me that you intend to be united with my nephew, Mr Darcy.

Elizabeth stares at her, amazed.

LADY CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I know this to be a scandalous falsehood, though not wishing to injure him by supposing it possible, I instantly set off to make my sentiments known.

ELIZABETH
If you believed it impossible, I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far.

LADY CATHERINE
To hear it contradicted, Miss Bennet.

ELIZABETH
(coolly)
Your coming here will be rather a confirmation, surely, if indeed such a report exists.

LADY CATHERINE
If? Do you then pretend to be ignorant of it? Has it not been industriously circulated by yourself?

ELIZABETH
I have never heard of it.

LADY CATHERINE
And can you declare there is no foundation for it?

ELIZABETH
I do not pretend to possess equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask the questions, which *I* may not choose to answer.

LADY CATHERINE
This is not to be borne. Has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?

ELIZABETH
Your Ladyship declared it to be impossible.

LADY CATHERINE
Let me be understood. Mr Darcy is engaged to my daughter. Now what have you to say?

ELIZABETH
Only this - if that is the case you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me.

LADY CATHERINE
Oh obstinate girl! This union has been planned since their infancy. Do you think it can be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world and wholly unallied to his family? Whose own sister's elopement resulted in the scandalously patched-up marriage, only achieved at the expense of your uncle? Heaven and earth, are the shades of Pemberly to be thus polluted? Now tell me once and for all, are you engaged to him?

ELIZABETH
I am not.

LADY CATHERINE
And will you promise never to enter into such an engagement?

ELIZABETH
I will not. And I certainly never shall. Allow me to say, the arguments which you have supported this extraordinary application have been as frivolous as the application was ill-judged. You have insulted me in every possible method and can now have nothing further to say. I must ask you to leave immediately. Good night.

Elizabeth throws open the door, revealing the family outside.

LADY CATHERINE
I have never been thus treated in my entire life.

Lady Catherine storms past the family and out into the night. Elizabeth is standing shaking with the excitement of having stood so firmly up for herself.

MR BENNET
Lizzie, what on earth is going on?

ELIZABETH
Just a small misunderstanding.

She walks past them to bed.

MRS BENNET
Lizzie!

ELIZABETH
For once in your life. Just leave me alone.

Everyone looks aghast at Elizabeth's reaction.

126 INT. BEDROOM - LONGBOURN - NIGHT. 126

Jane is fast asleep. Elizabeth unable to sleep. She quietly climbs out of bed and creeps out of the room.

127 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 127

Elizabeth sits alone downstairs, thinking. Outside we see dawn is breaking.

128 EXT. LONGBOURN - DAWN. 128

Elizabeth creeps out into the garden and wanders around through the early morning mist, as the sun starts to rise.

129 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE OVERLOOKING LONGBOURN - THE SAME. 129

Elizabeth walks out into the open countryside. The mists are starting to evaporate. From out of the mist in the distance a figure emerges. Her heart misses a beat. She is alone, vulnerable. Then she sees it is Darcy.

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy!

DARCY
What are you doing out here so early?

ELIZABETH
I could not sleep.

DARCY
Me neither. I have been up most of the night.

Elizabeth hardly knows how to react at this unexpected meeting. Rather politely she thanks Mr Darcy.

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy, I must thank you for your unexampled generosity to both my sisters. I know what kindnesses you have done for poor Lydia and suspect your hand in the happy resolution for Jane also.

DARCY
I am alarmed that you know of what I have been so in earnest to keep silent. But you must know that your happiness was one of my prime inducements.

Elizabeth looks at Darcy.

DARCY (CONT'D)
I know you are too generous to trifle with me. I believe you spoke with my Aunt last night, and it has taught me to hope as I had scarcely allowed myself before. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me forever.

Elizabeth is silent.

DARCY (CONT'D)
If, however, your feelings have changed...

Elizabeth gazes at him.

DARCY (CONT'D)
I would have to tell you, you have bewitched me body and soul and I love and love and love you. And never wish to be parted from you from this day on.

Elizabeth looks at him. She does not say a word. Darcy is staring at her for a reply. A tear rolls down Elizabeth's cheek.

ELIZABETH
I am very happy to inform you that not only have my sentiments changed there are no other words which could give me greater pleasure.

Darcy stares at her. They both start to cry. Darcy very, very slowly and gently touches her face. She closes her eyes. They kiss. She touches his face with her hand, the kiss becomes passionate.

130 INT. DRAWING ROOM - LONGBOURN - DUSK. 130

The place is in an uproar. Bingley, Jane, Mary, Kitty, Mr and Mrs Bennet are all gathered, fretting terribly about Elizabeth's whereabouts. Through a window we see Elizabeth lead Darcy along the duck board plank across the moat. Elizabeth enters the house, everybody starts.

MRS BENNET
Lizzie, where have you been. We thought something had happened to you.

Darcy follows Elizabeth in.

MRS BENNET (CONT'D)
Mr Darcy! What on earth are you doing here?

Elizabeth takes Mr Darcy's hand.

ELIZABETH
Mr Darcy has come to speak with Papa.

Everyone is stunned.

CUT TO

131 INT. HALLWAY/LIBRARY - LONGBOURN - DAY. 131

Elizabeth paces outside the door of the library, waiting. After a while Darcy emerges, he gives Elizabeth the briefest of smiles and leaves the door open. Elizabeth walks in. Her father is in a state of shock.

MR BENNET
Lizzie, are you out of your senses? I thought you hated the man.

ELIZABETH
No, Papa.

MR BENNET
He is rich, to be sure, and you will have more fine carriages than Jane. But will that make you happy?

ELIZABETH
(uncomfortable)
Have you no other objection than your belief in my indifference?

MR BENNET
None at all. We all know him to be a proud, unpleasant sort of fellow, but this would be nothing if you really liked him.

ELIZABETH
(tears in her eyes)
I do like him!
(with passion)
I love him! He's not proud. It's I who's been prejudiced, who didn't realize..... You don't know him, Papa...if I told you what he's really like. What he's done.

MR BENNET
What has he done?

CUT TO:

132 EXT. GARDEN - LONGBOURN - DAY. 132

Darcy, in an agony, paces up and down the lawn. He looks at the library window.

CUT BACK TO:

133 INT. LIBRARY - LONGBOURN - DAY. 133

Mr Bennet stares at his daughter.

MR BENNET
Good Lord. I must pay him back.

ELIZABETH
(shakes her head)
No, you mustn't tell anyone! He wouldn't want it.
(pause)
We misjudged him, me more than anyone. In every way,not just in this matter. I've been so blind. *He's* been so blind! About Jane, about so many things. Then so have I...
(breathless pause)
You see, he and I are so similiar...we're both so stubborn...
(shaky laugh)
Oh Papa...

Mr Bennet gazes at his daughter. He still can't quite take it in.

MR BENNET
You do love him, don't you?

Elizabeth nods.

ELIZABETH
Very much.

He looks at her earnestly, searching her face. He loves his daughter very deeply. What he sees leaves him in no doubt.

MR BENNET
I cannot believe that anyone can deserve you, but it seems I am over-ruled. So I heartily give my consent.

Elizabeth jumps up and puts her arms around him.

MR BENNET
I could not have parted with you, my Lizzie, to any one less worthy.

ELIZABETH
Oh thank you!

She starts to rush out.

MR BENNET
(calls out after her)
And if any young men come for Mary or Kitty, send them in, for I am quite at leisure.

134 EXT. PEMBERLY - NIGHT. 134

We move through a vast wedding party, following Elizabeth and Darcy. We meet all our characters. Lydia and Wickham are missing. Let everyone have an end.

Darcy and Elizabeth kiss, then Darcy pulls Elizabeth off into the shadows. We see them disappear into the park.

Coming close, we see them in the moonlight. It's Darcy and Elizabeth. Deer turn to gaze at them. The music fades as they walk further from the house, up the hill, past the outcrops of rocks. An owl hoots. Darcy turns to Elizabeth and smiles.

DARCY
Allow me, Mrs Darcy.

He puts out his hand. She takes it. He helps her up the rocks. When they get to the top they sit there, side by side, and gaze at the distant lights of Pemberley.

ELIZABETH
How did it begin?

DARCY
I cannot fix the hour, or the spot, or the look. It was too long ago and I was in the middle before I knew it had begun.

ELIZABETH
Now be sincere, did you admire me for my impertinenc?

DARCY
For the liveliness of your mind, I did.

ELIZABETH
You may as well call it impertinence, though make a virtue of it by all means. My good qualities are under your protection, and you are to exaggerate them as much as possible. And, in return, it belongs to me to find occasions for teasing and quarrelling with you as often as maybe... and I shall begin directly...

We draw back...their figures diminish, smaller and smaller under the immense, star-spangled sky...Fainter and fainter, the sound of music and laughter...

135 FADE TO BLACK... 135

THE END.